195.

AN

EXTRACT

OF THE

LIFE

OF

Monſieur De Renty.

K. Renti (G. J. B. de) Baron
de Renti et de Landelles.

AN EXTRACT OF THE LIFE OF Monſieur *De Renty.*

A late Nobleman of FRANCE.

Publiſh'd by JOHN WESLEY, M.A.
Fellow of *Lincoln* College, OXFORD.

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In JESUS CHRIST *neither Circumciſion availeth any thing, nor Uncircumciſion, but Faith which worketh by Love.* Gal. v. 6.

Seeſt thou, how Faith wrought together with his Works, and by Works was Faith made perfect? Ja. ii. 22.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

AN EXTRACT OF THE LIFE OF Monſieur DE RENTY.

CHAP. I.

Of his Birth, Marriage, and general Way of Life.

1. MR. *de Renty* deſcended from one of the moſt noble Houſes of *Artois*. He was the only Son of *Charles de Renty*, and was born in the Year 1611, at *Beny* in *Low Normandy*. There he was brought up till ſix or ſeven Years of Age, and then by his Mother carried to *Paris*, where he liv'd with her about two Years, till he was put into the College of *Navarre*; whence he was ſent to *Caen*, till at Seventeen he was removed to an Academy, or School of genteel Exerciſes at *Paris*. He was ſoon accompliſh'd in all the Exerciſes there taught: But what then pleas'd

him moſt was, the Mathematicks. For theſe he ſlighted all Sorts of Diverſions, till he underſtood them perfectly, and compos'd ſome Books therein.

2. About this Time a Stationer whom he uſed, preſented him with *Kempis of the Imitation of* CHRIST; and ſome Time after preſs'd him to read it, which he had no ſooner done, than he felt new Thoughts and Affections, and reſolved ſeriouſly to purſue the one Thing needful, the working out his Salvation. And ever after he ſo eſteem'd that Book, that he always carried it about him, and made uſe of it on all Occaſions.

3. At the Age of Twenty-two, he married *Elizabeth de Balſac*, Daughter of the Count of *Graville*, by whom he had five Children, four of which (two Sons and two Daughters) ſurviv'd him.

4. Having lived to the Age of twenty-ſeven Years, it pleaſed GOD to touch his Heart more cloſely; and this Time he mark'd as the Beginning of his entire Change, and perfect Conſecration to GOD's Service: In order whereto, he was well convinc'd of the Neceſſity of a good Guide; and GOD provided him one, ſuch as his Need required, a Perſon of deep Learning, of great Piety, and well-experienced in the Direction of Souls, who had the Conduct of him for twelve Years. By his Advice he withdrew altogether from Court, he renounc'd all Viſits of pure Compliment, and all unneceſſary Employments to give himſelf up to thoſe which might glorify GOD, and help his Neighbour.

5. Every Day before Dinner, and again in the Evening, he made an exact Search into his ſmalleſt Faults. He communicated three or four Times a Week, having ever an incredible Eſteem of the holy Euchariſt, bleſſing and praiſing GOD for its Inſtitution, and exciting all Men to do the ſame. He was uſed to ſay, "That the great Deſign of GOD in the Incarnation, Life, Death, and Reſurrection of his Son, was to convey unto us his Spirit, to be unto us Life eternal; and in order to cauſe us to die to ourſelves, and live thereby, he gave him to us in this holy Sacrament, and with him all the Bleſſings of Grace, to diſpoſe us for thoſe of Glory."

6. One Day in a Week he viſited the poor ſick People of the great Hoſpital *de Dieu:* Another thoſe of his own

own Pariſh; at third the Priſoners; and in the reſt he uſed to meet at Aſſemblies of Piety. He aſſembled his own Family every Evening to Prayers, and diſcourſed to them every *Saturday* on the Goſpel for the next Day. And of his Children he took more eſpecial Care, to engrave deeply in them the Fear of GOD, and to convince them that the Cuſtoms and Maxims of the World were utterly irreconcilable to the Goſpel of CHRIST.

7. The Order he kept in his Journies was this: In the Morning, before ſetting out, they join'd in Prayer; after ſetting out, the firſt Thing done was, the ſaying the *Itinerarium*; next was, the ſinging the *Litanies of our* LORD; then follow'd ſome Meditation, and after that a Part of the *Divine Office*. This being done he entertain'd the Company with ſome good Diſcourſe. Beholding the ſpacious Extent of the Country, he would ſpeak of the Immenſity of GOD. Upon the preſenting of any beautiful Object, he would diſcourſe of the Beauty of GOD, and in ſo lively a Manner as to touch the very Heart. Approaching near the Place where they were to dine, he began his Self-examination: And being come thither, as ſoon as out of his Coach, he went to the Church, and next, if there were any in the Place, to the Hoſpital. Being at his Inn, the firſt Thing he did in his Chamber was, to caſt himſelf on his Knees, and to pray with great Affection for all Perſons that entered that Place, and for Pardon of all Diſorders that had been there committed. If he ſaw any Thing offenſive written on the Walls or Chimneys, he defaced it, and in the Place wrote ſomething of Inſtruction. And always before his Departure he endeavoured to give ſome good Advice to the Servants of the Houſe, or to ſuch Poor as he could meet with, that ſo he might not paſs thro' any Place without doing ſome Good there. After Dinner, when in his Coach again, he took a little Time for Recollection, then ſung the *Veſpers*; which done, he wiſh'd the Company to uſe ſome uſeful Converſation. About Four they ſung the Evening Pſalms; afterward he applied himſelf to mental Prayer; and being come to his Inn, his Exerciſes were the ſame with thoſe of the Morning.

8. A fuller Account of his general Way of Life he writ to his ſecond Director, as follows:

" I have delayed ſome Days after the Command I had, to ſet down the employing of my Time, for the better diſcovering of ſome Things therein; but I find nothing there of ſtrict Order, becauſe all conſiſts in following the Order of GOD, which cauſes in a manner continually different Things, tho' all upon the ſame Foundation.

" For my outward Behaviour, I uſually riſe at Five (that is, after Part of the Night ſpent in Prayer). At my awakening, I conſider myſelf as nothing, before the Majeſty of GOD. I unite me to his Son and Spirit. Being riſen, I caſt myſelf down, and adore the Bleſſing of the Incarnation, which gives us acceſs to GOD; and deliver up myſelf to the Holy JESUS, to be entered into his Spirit.

" Being cloathed, I go into the Chapel, where I caſt myſelf down, and adore GOD, abaſing me before him, and making me the moſt little, moſt naked, moſt empty of myſelf that I can; and I hold me there by Faith, having Recourſe to his Son and to his Holy Spirit, that whatſoever is his Pleaſure may be done by me.

" Between Six and Seven I read two Chapters of the New Teſtament bare-headed and on my Knees. I then give Place to my Affairs; but if there be no Buſineſs urgent, I proſtrate myſelf before GOD till I go to Church. There I ſtay till half an Hour paſt eleven, except when we dine ſome poor People, then I return at eleven. Before Dinner I examine myſelf, and uſe ſome Prayers for the Church, and for the Propagation of the Faith. I dine at Twelve, and in the while have ſomething read. Half an Hour paſt Twelve I ſpend an Hour with them that have Buſineſs with me. Then I go out whither the Order of GOD ſhall direct. Some Days are aſſign'd for certain Exerciſes; others are not. But be it as it will, I endeavour to ſpend about Evening an Hour in Devotion. About Seven, after I have uſed ſome Prayers, we go to Supper. After Supper I inſtruct my Children. At Nine are Family Prayers, after which I meditate till Ten; and then going to my Chamber, and recommending myſelf to my GOD, after ſome ſhort Prayers, I endeavour to repoſe.

" As

" As to the Order of my Interior, I have not (as I may ſay) any; for ſince I left my *Breviary* all my Forms have left me, and now inſtead of ſerving me as Means to go to GOD, they would only be Hindrances. I bear in me ordinarily an experimental Verity, and a Plenitude of the Preſence of the moſt Holy Trinity, which elevates me by a ſimple View to GOD, and with that I do all that his Providence enjoins me, not regarding any Things for their Greatneſs or Littleneſs, but only the Order of GOD, and the Glory they may render him.

" For the Things done in Community, I often cannot reſt there: I perform indeed the Exterior for the keeping of Order; but follow always my Interior, becauſe when a Man hath GOD, there is no need to ſearch for him elſewhere. And when he holds us in one Manner, it is not for us to take hold of him in another, and the Soul knows well what unites it, and what multiplies and diſtracts it.

" For the Interior therefore, I follow this Attractive; and for the Exterior, I ſee the Divine Will, which I follow, with the Diſcernment of his Spirit, in all Simplicity; and ſo I poſſeſs by his Grace, in all Things, Silence of Spirit, a profound Reverence, and ſolid Peace. I communicate almoſt every Day, perceiving myſelf ſtrongly drawn thereto. I continually give up myſelf to GOD thro' JESUS CHRIST, worſhiping him in Spirit and in Truth, loving him with all my Heart, with all my Soul, with all my Mind, and with all my Strength, and ſeeing in all Things the Conduct of GOD, and adoring and following it. And this only abiding in my Soul, all Things elſe are defaced and blotted out. I have nothing of ſenſible in me, unleſs now and then ſome tranſitory Touches: But, if I may dare to ſay it, when I ſound my Will, I find it ſo quick and flaming, that it would devour me, if the ſame LORD who animates it (tho' unworthy) did not reſtrain it. I enter into a Heat and into a Fire, and even to my Finger's Ends, feel that all within me ſpeaks for its GOD, and ſtretcheth itſelf forth in Length and Breadth in his Immenſity, that it may there diſſolve and there loſe itſelf, to glorify him."

CHAP. II.

His Humility.

1. ST. *Auſtin* well obſerves, That Poverty of Spirit is nothing elſe but Humility: The truly Humble knowing themſelves to be nothing of themſelves but Sin and Miſery, to have nothing, as being at beſt but manifold Receivers of the Grace of GOD; to be able to do nothing, having no Power of themſelves even to think a good Thought, and to deſerve nothing but Shame and Contempt, but Miſery and Puniſhment. And they are willing, yea deſirous, that all others ſhould think of them as they do of themſelves.

2. M. *de Renty* being well-convinc'd that this is the Foundation of all Virtue, and that it was the proper Virtue of JESUS CHRIST, whom he had propoſed to himſelf as his Pattern in all Things, embraced it with his whole Affection, gave himſelf up to it with all his Force, and practiſed it in its utmoſt Latitude.

3. He had ſo low an Opinion of himſelf, as it would be a difficult Thing to expreſs. The Greatneſs of GOD, whenever he conſidered it, humbled him to an immeaſurable Depth; "A Mote, ſaid he, in the Sun is very little, but I am far leſs in the Preſence of GOD, I am nothing." But correcting himſelf, he added, "Alas, I am too much; I am a Sinner, an Anathema thro' my Crimes." To the ſame Perſon he wrote, "Methinks I break myſelf in Pieces before GOD: that I am ſpoken of, that I have ſo much as a Name, is a ſtrange Thing." I have ſeen him very often (ſays one that knew him well) humble himſelf, as it were to the Centre of the Earth, while he ſpoke to me of GOD; ſaying, "It was not for ſuch a one as him to ſpeak of him, but that he ought rather to contain himſelf in Silence."

4. This exceeding low Opinion he had of himſelf, made him more than once ſay, with Tears in his Eyes, "That he was much aſtoniſh'd at the Goodneſs of Men in ſuffering of him, and that he could not enough wonder,

der, why every where they threw not Dirt at him, and that all the Creatures did not bandy againſt him." And he was perſuaded, it was much Boldneſs in him to ſpeak, and that Men ſhewed great Patience in enduring his Converſation.

5. Nor was there any Thing which did not ſerve to increaſe his Humility. He abaſed himſelf much in the Conſideration of the Weakneſs of our Nature, of which, as he expreſt it, "It is important that a Man have Experience, that he may neither forget himſelf, nor the Place he ought to hold: That no Fleſh may glory in his Sight; that being abaſed and rendered as a Thing that is not at all, JESUS CHRIST may be in him, the Life of Grace and Holineſs, waiting for the Time of our Redemption."

6. But much more was he humbled by the Conſideration of his paſt Sins: In one of his Letters to his Director, he writes thus; "My Faults are as one great Heap, which I feel in myſelf, obſtructing the Light from GOD. I am ſtrangely remiſs and ungrateful. I find much in myſelf to confound and humble me." In another, "I am ſenſible of my Fault, in mentioning, that I had placed a Servant in ſuch a Family. I had a Motion within me, not to have ſpoken it; and yet it eſcaped from me: Of which I am exceeding ſenſible. I ſhould have been more faithful to the Spirit of GOD." And in another, "I am as blind (or rather more) in ſeeing my Faults as in other Things. Only in general, I have a deep Sence of my Miſery: And I can ſay, I am not ignorant of my Unworthineſs, and the deplorable Corruption Sin hath wrought in me. But lately, I mentioned the Faults of a certain Perſon to another that knew of them before, to make him underſtand that he was in a better Condition. But my Conſcience reproached me, that I might have done this without: And I confeſs I meddled too much in that Affair. In Sum, I am a Straggler from GOD, and a Ground overrun with Thorns."

7. He drew yet further Matter of Humiliation from his Rank and Condition, and the ſecular Advantages which it gave him. He not only deſpiſed, but was aſhamed of them; often groaning before the Majeſty of GOD,

God, and saying, "He was in the lowest Condition, according to the Spirit of Jesus Christ, and that he had great Confusion to see himself in that Estate." Hence it was, that he solemnly renounced his Nobility, and gave it into the Hands of our Lord; that he did not love even for any one to call him *Monsieur*, and that he wholly declined the Title of *Marquis*, (which was proper to his House) and suffered only that of Baron of *Renty*.

8. Even the Gifts and Graces of God made him more humble; thus producing their true Effect, which is, To abase and elevate the Soul both together, to raise it to God, and abase it to itself. In whatever Good was done by him, he assumed no Share at all, but referred all to God the true Source. And so in the Management of all those Talents, he had always his Hands clean, without touching what appertained to God. Nor would he therefore that any one should consider him in what he said or did, but regard God alone therein. And to one who much desired a Visit from him, he wrote thus, "I cannot bear the Account you make of my Visits and Society. Let us look much upon God; let us bind ourselves strictly to Jesus Christ, that we may learn of him fully to renounce ourselves. O, my God, when will it be that we shall eye ourselves no more, when we shall speak no more of ourselves, and when all Vanity shall be destroyed!"

9. He likewise esteemed himself most unworthy of any of the Graces or Favours of God. Of which he says to a Friend, "The Gifts of God are sometimes so great, that they put us beyond ourselves. As among Men, if a poor Man receive a Gift from a Prince, according to the Grandeur of his own Power, he is utterly overwhelmed, and can find no Words to express his Acknowledgment: So God gives Blessings that go beyond our Expectations or Capacities, and which make us see how unworthy we are, without daring to lift up our Eyes; so doth their Brightness dazzle, and their Greatness astonish us."

10. The same Opinion which he had of himself, he was willing, yea desirous that others likewise should have of him. "If I were to wish any Thing, said he,

it

it ſhould be, to be much humbled, and to be treated as an Off-ſcouring by Men." And hence he received Contempt, when it came, not with Patience only, but with Joy: Of which he gave an evident Proof in his firſt Journey to *Dijon*, whence he thus wrote to his Director:

"The Reports here ſpread concerning me are, That I have nothing but Artifice and Shews of Devotion; and that I kept private, out of Fear by coming abroad of diſcovering what I was. Moſt, I find, even of thoſe from whom I expected quite the contrary, have ſollicited againſt me. And hereby GOD hath ſhewn me many Favours. I have been with them, and received Humiliation with great Joy. I have been very wary of opening myſelf in any Thing that might recommend me to them. I have only done in my Buſineſs what Truth required; and for any Thing elſe, have made it Matter of Confuſion, as I ought. I ſhall be here, I believe, as one Excommunicate, as the Scape-goat of the old Law, driven out into the Wilderneſs for my enormous Sins. I deſire only to love GOD, and condemn myſelf."

11. Nor was it only in his Words but in his Actions alſo, that the Humility of his Heart appeared. Since his entire Dedication of himſelf to GOD, he would not ſuffer a Cuſhion to be carried to Church for him; but to be there hid and diſregarded, he often mingled himſelf among Machanicks and mean Perſons. He kept himſelf always as much as he could at the lower end of the Church; and frequently, if the Door was ſhut, ſaid his Prayers on the Outſide of it, that he "might not, as he ſaid, put any to the Trouble of opening it to a poor Sinner."

12. During the War at *Paris*, he went himſelf to buy Bread for the Poor, and carried thro' the Streets as much as his Strength would permit. At the ſame Time offering to take into his Care the Church Plate of a Monaſtery, he preſſed them to let him carry to his Lodging, (which was two Miles thence) and on Foot as he was, a very large and weighty Piece. And being deſired that when he did them the Favour to Viſit them again, he would come in his Coach, by reaſon of the Diſtance; he

he answered, "he did not love to make use of a Coach, he must endeavour to make himself in every Thing very little." He went therefore thither on Foot, and returned at five or six, in the shortest Days, sometimes in thawing Weather. And being told of the Pains he took, he replied, "Our LORD took Pains in a far other Manner."

13. When he was assisting with his own Hand in the repairing one of his Houses, he thus expressed himself:

"Blessed for ever be our great GOD, by JESUS CHRIST! I believe I ought to labour in the lowest Employments; and the Time I spend therein, I count very dear, regarding it as ordered by GOD. What makes me the more to know it is his Order, is this; That from Time to Time I feel more of Retribution from him in one Instant, than the Patience and Humiliation of a Sinner could merit in all his Life. He so opens himself to me, that I am quite mollified, and melted into Tears. My Eyes are so full of them, that often I have much ado to keep them in, pierced as I am with Love, with Reverence, and with Acknowledgment of his Goodness manifested by his enlightening Presence, and of his inexplicable Conduct. I see we are not, by a Spirit of Pride, under Pretence of the Glory of GOD, to dispense with ourselves from labouring in Things mean and painful. It was a Work very gross and mean, for JESUS CHRIST to converse with Men, who had more of Rudeness than these Stones I deal with. O that I may obtain a Part in his Obedience, and Submission to the Orders of GOD his Father."

14. Being one Day to go to a Person of great Quality, in a Business that much concerned the Glory of GOD, he would not use his Coach, tho' he was to traverse in a manner all *Paris*, and it poured down with Rain. One moved, that at least his Footman might carry a Cloak, which he might take when he came thither. But he yielded not. Only he consented to throw that Cloak over him: And in the Nobleman's House, he laid aside the wet Cloak, and appear'd in the other ordinary one of his own.

15. Behold

15. Behold another Effect of his Humility, of which he writ to his Director, *Dec.* 20, 1646.

" The other Day my Lord Chancellor's Lady ſent me a Packet of Letters, in which were ſome from the King, wherein I was made Counſellor of State. I ſent her Word, that I received what had the Mark of the King with all Reſpect. But I moſt humbly begged ſhe would be pleaſed to take in good part, if I did not accept thoſe Letters, but deſired that the Buſineſs might ſleep without Noiſe. My Diſpoſition toward Affairs of this Nature is, to have nothing at all to do with them. If they come upon me perforce, without my ſeeeking, our LORD will give me Strength to bear them."

16. To the ſame Perſon, on another Occaſion, he wrote as follows:

" Walking one Day thro' the Streets of *Paris*, in a mean Dreſs, I deeply reflected on that of the Apoſtle, *We are become as the Filth and Off-ſcouring of the World.* I conſidered how much Neatneſs and new Things, even in the moſt trifling Inſtances, do hurt (if one take not good heed) the Simplicity and Lowlineſs of a Chriſtian Spirit. And I ſaw it was a great Temptation for any, to think to preſerve his outward Grandeur, in hopes thereby to have more Weight and Authority for the Service of GOD. This is a Pretence, indeed, that the Infirmity of moſt Chriſtians makes uſe of in the Beginning: But Experience draws them at laſt to JESUS CHRIST, who was made the loweſt of Men."

17. A further Proof of his Humility, was his Carriage to his Director. He did nothing that concerned himſelf, without his Conduct: To him he propoſed whatever he deſigned, either by ſpeaking or writing, clearly and punctually, deſiring " his Advice, his Pleaſure, and Bleſſing upon it;" and that with the utmoſt Reſpect and Submiſſion: And without Reply or Diſputing, he ſimply and exactly followed his Order. His Director having written to him, he anſwered in theſe Terms; " I beſeech you to believe, that altho' I am moſt imperfect and a great Sinner, yet if you do me the Favour to ſend me a Word of what you know to be neceſſary for me, I hope with GOD's Help to profit thereby.

thereby. I pant not after any Thing but to find God and JESUS CHRIST, in Simplicity and Truth. I pretend to nothing in this World but this; and beſide this I deſire nothing."

18. The laſt Effect of his Humility we ſhall mention, was his extreme Contempt of the World. He deſpiſed all which it could give or promiſe; all its Goods, Pleaſures, Honours, Dignities; counted all its Allurements as Dung and Droſs, trampled under Foot all its Glories. He beheld for this End our LORD for his Pattern, who, from his very firſt Entrance into it, made an open Profeſſion of an abſolute Contempt of it, "*Becauſe he was not of the World.*"

19. To animate a Lady with the ſame Spirit, he wrote to her thus: "I wonder how a Thing ſo little as Man, drawn out of nothing in his Original, infected with his firſt Parent's Sin, and the Addition of his own; when he is raiſed to ſo high a Degree of Honour, as to be One with CHRIST the Son of GOD; can continue to eſteem the World, or make any Account of its Vanities! Shall the Things of Earth waſte the little Time we have to ſecure the Treaſures of Heaven; Things that all will paſs away like a Dream: As we ſee our Fathers are gone already, and there is no more Remembrance of them: Their Joys and Griefs, their Pleaſures and Pains, are they not all vaniſh'd away? And are we not ſure they were out of their Sences, if they conſidered any Thing but GOD in their Ways? The ſame will befall us: Every Thing elſe will paſs away, and GOD alone will abide."

The ſame Lady, in another Letter, he encourages thus: "Courage, all is well! We muſt die to the World, and ſearch out the Hindrances it brings to our Perfection. We muſt live in the World as not living there; poſſeſs it, as not poſſeſſing it. Let us drive out of our Minds the Affection to our fine Houſes; let us ruin the Delights of our Gardens; let us burn our Groves; let us baniſh theſe vain Images which we have of our Children; approving in them what we condemn in ourſelves, the Show and Glitter of the World."

"I know there is a Difference of Conditions, but all ought to reject thoſe Intailments on noble Blood,

(as

(as Men account them) thoſe Principles of aſpiring to the higheſt, and of bearing nothing. Let us take from them this Vanity of Mind, this Statelineſs of Behaviour. Let us arm them againſt the pernicious Examples of thoſe Grandees in Story, whoſe Puniſhments are as eminent in Hell, as their Preſumption was upon Earth.

" My Deſign is not, that you ſhould demoliſh your Walks, or let your Gardens run into a Wilderneſs. The Ruins I ſpeak of muſt be made in our own Minds, not executed on Things inſenſible. When I ſay, we muſt ſet all on Fire, my Thoughts were, to follow that admirable Spirit of the Apoſtle, who would that we have Poverty amidſt our Riches, and Diveſtment in the midſt of our Poſſeſſions: He means, that our Spirit be thoroughly purified and ſeparated from all Creatures; becauſe a Chriſtian does himſelf great Wrong, if he entertains in his Heart any other Inclinations than thoſe of JESUS CHRIST, who ſaw all the World without deſtroying it, but withal without cleaving to it."

20. It is to bring us to this Spirit, that GOD permits us to meet ſo many Pains and Troubles in the World; as when a Man ſets Thorns in a Way, to make Men take another. " GOD has his Ends, ſays Mr. *De Renty*, in all theſe Contrarieties, *viz.* that thoſe who are His, ſhould be yet more His, and deſpiſe more and more all that is in the World. By theſe the Confuſion and Vanity of the World are made known to them that are not of it; who being in the Spirit of Death, wait for nothing more there but Death; bringing forth, in the mean while, the Fruits of Life Eternal."

CHAP. III.

His Self-Denial and Mortification.

1. AS it is abſolutely neceſſary for every Soldier of CHRIST, who would not *ſo fight as one that beateth the Air, to keep the Body under, and bring it into Subjection*; Mr. *de Renty* vigorouſly applied himſelf

ſelf to this Work. He made but one Meal a day for ſeveral Years; till he was injoined to take more Nouriſhment, to be the better able to undergo the great Labours he undertook for his Neighbour. He nevertheleſs eat but little, and always of the worſt. A Perſon who obſerved him at Dinner one Day, took Notice, all he eat was ſome Pears only, and that with ſo great Serioufneſs and Recollection, that it was eaſy to diſcern his Mind was on GOD, and not upon his Meat.

2. When one of his Friends entertained him one Day at *Caen*, he was much grieved (as he afterwards declared) that Chriſtians ſhould be Feaſters; adding, *It was a Torment to him to be where there was ſo much Superfluity*. Hereon, his Friends took no more Thought about his Diet, knowing his beſt Entertainment was the meaneſt Fare, and that they could not oblige him more than by leaving him to his Liberty. And often at *Paris*, when he was ſo far from Home, that he could not return to Dinner, he would ſtep into a Baker's Shop, and after a Piece of Bread and a Draught of Water, chearfully go on with his Buſineſs.

3. Nor did he deny himſelf only with regard to his Taſte, but to all his other Senſes alſo. When he went into the Country, and came in the Evening to his Inn, after having diſmiſs'd his Servants, he either paſs'd the Night in a Chair, or lay down in his Cloaths and Boots, which was his Cuſtom till Death. And when at *Amiens*, a Lady, in Honour of his Vertue and Quality, had prepar'd him a rich Bed in a ſtately Chamber, he made no Uſe of it, but laid him down upon a Bench, and there ſlept till Morning.

4. Being come to *Pontois* in Winter, and lodging at the *Carmelite Nuns*, he told them not to make a Fire, or prepare a Bed. He then went to viſit the Priſoners (which he never forgot) and at his Return, about Nine in the Evening, finding them going to Prayers, without taking any thing to eat, he went into the Church with them, where he continued till Eleven. And indeed at every Time and every Place, on every Occaſion, even in the ſlighteſt and meaneſt Things, he kept a watchful Eye over himſelf, that he might in no Inſtance

ſtance fulfil the Deſires of the Fleſh, but daily inure himſelf to endure Hardſhip.

5. A ſhort Deſcription of his Mortification, or Deadneſs to the World, we have in his own Words. "Since the Time I gave up my Liberty to GOD, I was given to underſtand, to what a State the Soul is brought, which is capable of Union with Him. I ſaw my Soul reduced into a ſmall Point, contracted and ſhrunk up to nothing. At the ſame Time I beheld myſelf as encompaſs'd with whatſoever the World loves, and as it were, a Hand removing all this far from me, and plunging it into the Ocean. Firſt, I ſaw removed all outward Things, Kingdoms, great Offices, ſtately Buildings, rich and elegant Furniture, Gold and Silver, Recreations, Pleaſures: All which hinder the Soul in her Way to GOD, of which therefore it is his Pleaſure ſhe be diveſted, that ſhe may arrive at that Death which will bring her into the Poſſeſſion of real Life. Secondly, all inward Things, which are of a more delicate and precious Nature, as Learning, Reaſon, Strength of Memory and Underſtanding; to which likewiſe we are in a manner dead, if we are alive to GOD. And I perceived that we muſt come like little Infants, ſimple and innocent, ſeparated not only from Evil, but even from our ordinary Manner of doing what is Good. We are to undertake what Things the Divine Providence preſents to us, by making our Way by GOD to them, rather than by them to GOD. A truly mortified Soul ſees nothing but GOD: Not ſo much (if I may ſo ſpeak) as the Things ſhe does, of which nothing ſtays in her, neither Choice, nor Joy, nor Sorrow, for their Greatneſs, or for their Littleneſs, for good or bad Succeſs; but only the good Pleaſure and Order of GOD, which ruleth in all Things, and which in all Things contents the Soul that adheres to Him, and not to the Viciſſitude of Affairs, and is therefore conſtantly even, and always the ſame in the midſt of all Changes."

6. As to the Particulars of Mr. *de Renty*'s Mortification, in the firſt Place, he was dead to Riches. "I acknowledge before GOD (ſays he in a Letter to his Director) his great Mercy to me thro' his Son, in freeing me from the Things of this World, and my con-

ſtant Thoughts are, that if his Order did not oblige me to do otherwiſe, I would quit all that I have." And to another, "All that can be imagined in this World is of ſmall Concern, tho' it were the loſing of all our Goods. This poor Ant-Hill is not worth a ſerious Thought. Had we but a little Faith and a little Love, how happy ſhould we eſteem ourſelves in giving away all, to attend on GOD only."

7. Thus entirely, even in the Poſſeſſion of Riches, was his Heart diſengaged from them. And when the better Part of his Eſtate was in Danger of being loſt, he ſaid, without the leaſt Emotion, "Since GOD hath committed this Eſtate to me, I will do what ſhall behove me to preſerve it, and then 'tis all one to me what follows." Yea, he often expreſs'd a kind of holy Envy toward the Poor, and a high Eſteem of their Condition, both as moſt advantageous for Chriſtian Perfection, and becauſe CHRIST himſelf had lived and died therein. "I avow to you, (ſays he to a Friend) the more of Riches come to me, the more do I diſcover of the Malignity affixed to them. My Heart is ſtrongly inclined to follow Him who was the moſt poor and depreſſed among all his Followers. But that I know I may not put myſelf into that Eſtate, I ſhould pant after it very much. What I infer from hence is this, That not knowing the Counſels of GOD, I cannot tell how he will diſpoſe of me for the future: But I offer myſelf up to whatſoever ſhall pleaſe Him, knowing that with Him I can do all Things."

8. This his inward Temper appear'd in a Thouſand outward Effects. He parted with ſeveral Books, becauſe richly bound; uſed no Gloves in any Seaſon; wore no Cloaths, but plain and cloſe made; carried no Silver about him, but for Works of Charity. I have ſeen him at firſt in his Coach, with a Page and Footman; afterward, in his Coach with a Footman, without a Page; then with his Footman only, without his Coach; and in fine, without either.

9. And as he was dead to Riches, and to all the Things of the World, ſo he was, Secondly, to the Perſons in it: Having no Affection for any, but what was grounded upon, and ſubordinate to the Love of GOD.

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This was particularly obſervable, with regard to thoſe who were engaged to him by one of the tendereſt Ties, who depended upon him, and uſed his Counſel for the Conduct of their Souls. To one of theſe he wrote, "I cannot hear without Trouble the great Matter you make of my Converſation: Let us breathe after GOD, and learn from JESUS CHRIST an entire Renunciation of our own Affections." And in another Letter thus: "JESUS CHRIST is ever the ſame, and his Grace is continually advancing; and as long as I am His, I ſhall be yours for his ſake. He is not wont to part Souls by the Separation of Bodies: Since his Cuſtom is, only to take away what might be a Hindrance to the perfect Life of the Spirit."

10. To a Friend who had loſt his Director, he wrote thus: "His Remove would doubtleſs be a great Loſs to you and all the Country, if the Providence of GOD did not rather ſanctify and eſtabliſh, than deſtroy; but by removing theſe viſible Supports, he often ſettles us more firmly in our Adherence to him thro' CHRIST, where we find all Power, and who is ſo near that he is even in the midſt of us; and when our Dependence upon Creatures is cut off by his Providence, we experimentally find, that we are not left deſtitute, but that Supply is made either by his Spirit which dwelleth in us, or by his Miniſters that remain, who the fewer they are, the more is the Grace we receive by them multiplied. Nor ſhould we be further engaged to thoſe who aſſiſt us in our Spiritual Conduct, than as to GOD's Inſtruments, whoſe Help it is his Will we ſhould make uſe of, but no longer than he pleaſeth; and when it is his Will to take them from us by Death, or otherwiſe, we ought not to loſe our Courage, but with Submiſſion and Gratitude reſign all to Him, who will again provide for us as ſeemeth him beſt."

11. He was, Thirdly, dead to all Deſire of every kind. Being one Day aſked, "How he could be ſo quiet in ſuch Circumſtances, he anſwered, "That thro' GOD's Mercy, he was indifferent to all Things, and that he no longer felt either Fear or Deſire of any Thing." And writing to his Director, he ſays, "For the future I could wiſh, if there be any Thing left for

me to wiſh, that I had nothing left me but my GOD: This is the rich Treaſure of the Heart, the ſure Repleniſhment of the Soul."

12. He had no Deſire even of ſenſible Graces and Conſolations; touching which, to one who eagerly deſired them, he expreſs'd himſelf thus. "The want of ſenſible Comfort, Dryneſs, and other Troubles of Spirit, are to be borne with upon any Terms, and we muſt give up ourſelves as forlorn Creatures, throwing ourſelves wholly upon GOD." And again, "However dry your Soul may be, when you endeavour to place it in a State of Reverence and Affiance in the Preſence of GOD, perſevere ſtill as much as you can, and keep yourſelf ſhut up in the Cabinet of your Heart; ſuffer the Noiſe of all thoſe Tempeſts without; be ſtill, and mind them not; they have all their Uſe; they ſerve to purge the Soul, and diſpoſe it for the Operation of GOD upon it. Let then Diſtractions, and all Sorts of Imaginations aſſault you, as it pleaſeth GOD, but let them not hinder you from this holy Exerciſe; diverting (as you are able) your Mind from them, continue your Sacrifice, with full Aſſurance you ſhall not wait long, before your LORD come." And when he found himſelf, for a Time, in ſuch a Condition, he would cry out aloud, "I am thine, O GOD, in ſpite of all theſe Things, and ſo I will continue without Reſerve for ever." And ſometimes he would write with his Finger upon the Ground, "I am content with every Thing that proceeds from the Will of GOD: I aſk nothing elſe but what he appoints for me; I will never trouble myſelf to procure Conſolations, or to be freed from Dryneſs; my Reſolution is, to bleſs GOD at all Times."

13. Laſtly, He was dead to his own Will, which he had perfectly reſigned in Conformity to the Will of GOD. "Far be it from me, ſaith he in one of his Letters, to act in this by my own Spirit; I would have it wholly annihilated, that it might know no other Language but Nothing, and continually Nothing; to follow in all the Footſteps of the Divine Will, according to its Meaſure and Manner." In another thus: "My Saviour hath graciouſly brought me to ſuch a State of Indifferency

Indifferency for every Thing, that I could be well content, all my Life, to be fix'd to my Bed, a Paralytick, not able to ſtir, without making any Reflection on any Service I might render to my Neighbour, or that I could render him no more: All Things, according to the Will of GOD, being equal to me." And in a Third: "Of late I have been buſied in ſuch Employments as were ſufficient to have overwhelmed ſo weak a Spirit as mine, had it not been abſolutely reſign'd to the Will of GOD. It is on Him alone I reſt, having renounced myſelf. I adore the Decrees of his ſacred Will, who holdeth all Things in his own Hands, to keep us ſubject unto him by his Juſtice, and to ſanctify us by his Love: Happy, if we have the Hearts of Children, the Spirit of CHRIST JESUS, to ſigh after him, and cry continually, *Abba Father!*"

CHAP. IV.

His Patience.

1. QUeſtionleſs the humble Man is patient, becauſe he knows he deſerves far more than he ſuffers: And whoever will ſearch into the true Cauſe of his own Impatience, will find it to be no other than Pride. On the contrary, M. *de Renty* being moſt humble, was by Conſequence moſt patient.

2. Perſons who had lived a very long Time with him, and carefully ſtudied all his Actions, never heard him complain for any Thing whatever, neither for Sickneſs, or Loſs, or on any other Occaſion; but they always obſerved in him a Conſtancy immovable, continually lifting up his Heart to GOD, and offering all to him, without otherwiſe dwelling on what was grievous; being glad that the Work of GOD went on, and receiving all in the Spirit of Sacrifice.

3. In his ſecond Journey to *Dijon*, with his Lady and the Counteſs of *Châtres*, he was ſeized with a violent Rheumatiſm, which put him into Pain all over his Body: And when he was obliged to take his Bed, he went

went thither quite ſtooping, ſupported by a Staff, and by a Perſon that led him. But notwithſtanding the Extremity of the Pain, he made no Complaint, nor uttered one Word. The Ladies ſeeing him firſt quite pale and wan, and in a Moment all on Fire, told him, "Surely he was very ill;" He anſwered only by a Diſcourſe on the Pain endured by JESUS CHRIST, and the Favour it was for a Soul to ſuffer for GOD's Will; but in Terms ſo full of Sweetneſs, and with ſo much of Love and Zeal, that the Company were affected with great Devotion in hearing him."

4. When he was again aſked, whether he was not in much Pain, he at length anſwered plainly, "My Pains are great, even to Swooning; but tho' I feel them in their Extremity, yet, thro' the Grace of GOD, I yield not up myſelf to them, but to Him." He ſaid farther, that being led into his Chappel of *Citry*, and ſet down upon a Bench by reaſon of his Illneſs, the Bench broke without any viſible Cauſe, and that he believed the Evil Spirit had broken it, in order to provoke him to Impatience, making him fall untowardly; "But by the Mercy of GOD, ſaid he, tho' the Pain that ſurprized me was ſharp, I was no more moved than you ſee me now."

5. Nor was it only in Sickneſs, but in all Occurrences of Life, that he carefully practiſed this Virtue; ſo that whatſoever befel him, tho' it ſhock'd his whole Nature, his Body, Spirit, Judgment, Will, Inclinations, Deſires, Deſigns, and thoſe of the beſt Sort, he poſſeſs'd his Soul in Patience and Tranquility, receiving all without any Alteration, without being either exalted or dejected by it.

6. "Praying to GOD, ſays he in one of his Papers, before the Holy Sacrament, a poor Man came to me to beg an Alms. In this Inſtant it was given me to underſtand, that if we were well inlighten'd, *we ſhould never imagine ourſelves to be hindered, by any Perſon or Thing:* Becauſe we ſhould in all Things regard the Order of GOD, conducting all to our Advantage: We ſhould ſee that both inward and outward Diſtractions are to be received with the ſame Spirit; and that the Un-

Uneaſineſs theſe little Accidents give us, ſprings purely from our Want of Mortification.

" We ought indeed, as far as we can, to ſhun the Occaſions. But when they come, we muſt look upon them as ordered by GOD, and receive and bear them with all Sweetneſs, Humility and Reverence: And then, tho' they interrupt us, the Order of GOD is not interrupted in us. And this indeed is the great Secret of the Spiritual Life; this is Paradice upon Earth.

" In Truth, nothing troubles us but thro' our own Fault: All the Vexation which we inwardly feel, or outwardly ſhew, when any one croſſes or hinders us from doing any Thing, flows from the Diſorder of our too much engaged Spirit. For the removing of which, and keeping our Hearts in Peace, we muſt mark this well: *Whoever hinders us from doing one Good Work, thereby gives us the Means of practiſing another.* A Man, ſuppoſe, interrupts your Reading and Prayer. But he gives you an Occaſion of exerciſing Patience, which at this Time will pleaſe GOD, and perfect you, more than all thoſe other Employments. In them there was ſomething of your own Will; but in this you wholly renounce yourſelf. And the Fulneſs of GOD is not, but in the Emptineſs of the Creature."

7. One great Source of M. *de Renty*'s Patience was, the high Eſteem he had of Sufferings, which ſometimes made him ready to cry out with that holy Woman, " Either to die or to ſuffer"! " I ſee, ſays he, that in a manner, every Thing is unprofitable in this Life but to ſuffer. Every Pleaſure is a too haſty Seizure of that Recompence, which is not due to Criminals, who ſojourn in this World only to be purged. Some Pleaſures indeed may be ſometimes neceſſary, in regard of our Weakneſs; but even they are apt to hinder the Soul from attaining ſo high a Degree of Perfection.

8. " Tho' I dare not chuſe or bring Sufferings upon myſelf, (ſays he in a Letter to his Director) yet having always before my Eyes how little I render to GOD for his Favours, I am inflamed to ſuffer with our LORD. In every other Thing we are Receivers from GOD. But in this, tho' we receive the Grace to ſuffer, yet the Suffering is that which we can in a Manner give to GOD,

God, and is the beſt Gage and Proof of our Love." But he very wiſely adds, "Altho' I know this, yet I ceaſe not to know what I am: And amidſt all my Inclinations and Deſires, I take care not to beg to ſuffer the leaſt Thing: Or, if I happen to do ſo, I revoke it afterwards, as having done fooliſhly. I have too much Experience of my Weakneſs. I give myſelf only to my God for every Thing he pleaſes. By his Order I *will* all: With him I can *do* all: And that which is ordered by him is always accompanied by his Grace."

9. The ſame Spirit he earneſtly recommended to all who were ſtudious of Chriſtian Perfection. To one of whom he ſaid, "It is a great Favour to ſuffer; that is, if you ſuffer in the Spirit of Jesus Christ. But there are very few that do ſo; very few that ſuffer with a perfect Reſignment to what God ordains concerning them; very few without ſome Inquietude, and dwelling in their Thoughts upon their Preſſures; few that give up all Events to the Conduct of God, to employ themſelves entirely in his Praiſe, and to give Way by their Acquieſcence and Submiſſion for him to exerciſe all his Rights and Power over them."

10. One that was in great Pain he encouraged thus: "Many are called Chriſtians, but few have a Chriſtian Spirit. Many look up to Heaven in their Prayers, but in their Lives they are Children of Nature, looking only upon the Earth. If they do lift up their Eyes to Heaven it is only to complain; to pray God to condeſcend to their Deſires, not to ſhew their Acceptance of his. Or perhaps they will give ſome ſmall Things to God; but not thoſe on which they have fixed their Affection. If he ſeparates them from them, it is a diſmembering which he muſt make, and to which they cannot conſent. As tho' the Life of Chriſtians were not a Life of Sacrifice, a continual Imitation of a crucified Saviour.

"God, who knows our Wretchedneſs, takes from us for our Good, the Cauſe of our Evil, a Parent, a Child, a Huſband, that he may by another Evil, Affliction, draw us to himſelf, and make us ſee that all theſe Ties to whatſoever it be that ſeparates us from him, are

are ſo many Obſtacles to our real Happineſs; and ſuch Obſtacles that we ſhall one Day own in the Face of all the Creation, the greateſt Mercy he ever did us was to free us from them. But we muſt beware not to count this Mercy a Chance or Misfortune; for this would be to turn the Remedy into Poiſon.

"Let us enter into the holy Diſpoſition which was in CHRIST, to ſuffer willingly for the Glory of GOD, and our Salvation. Is it not ſtrange, that tho' the Way he paſt through to Glory was Ignominy, Pain, and the Croſs, yet they that call themſelves his Followers, deſire and expect another Way for themſelves to walk in? It is a Shame for a Chriſtian to paſs his Days more at Eaſe than JESUS CHRIST did. Let us therefore go after him, and ſuffer with him. Bleſſed be Sickneſs, the Loſs of Honour, Riches, Goods, of the neareſt Things, and the Separation from all Creatures, which hold us bowed toward the Earth, if it ſet us ſtreight, and make us lift up our Eyes to Heaven, and enter into the Deſigns of GOD over us. Bleſſed be the Plague, the War, the Famine, all the Scourges of GOD, which produce in us theſe Effects of Grace and Salvation!"

11. The greateſt Exerciſe of Patience he ever had, was that which was given him by his Mother; ſhe claimed a large Share of what his Father had bequeathed to him; who with great Submiſſion and Reſpect gave her all that he believed her Due, and over and above. But ſhe demanded ſtill more, which (her Son being adviſed by Council) could not be given without Wrong to his Children, referred the whole Buſineſs to Arbitrators, and agreed that his Mother ſhould chooſe them all. The Day being come for their giving Sentence, his Mother was in one Chamber of the Houſe, and her Son, with his Lady and a Friend in another, where his Employment was, to pray to GOD for ſuch an Iſſue as might be for his Glory, and the Procurement of Peace. When the Award was brought, altho' it was not advantageous to him, and there was a large Penalty on whomſoever did not ſtand to it, he heard it with perfect Calmneſs,

and

and immediately ſigned it, without Objection or Diſpute.

12. Believing now that his Mother was fully ſatisfied, he was no ſooner returned home, than he cauſed *Te Deum* to be ſung, beginning it himſelf, in Thankſgiving for this happy Concluſion. But GOD, to refine and purify him the more, permitted the Croſs to continue upon him. For his Mother, not ſatisfied yet, found Means to appeal from the Award, without incurring the Penalty. Her Son did all that was poſſible for him to alter her Deſign: After earneſt Prayer, and extraordinary Faſting, he went to her, caſt himſelf on his Knees before her, and with the utmoſt Reverence, Humility and Submiſſion, begged of her over and over, with abundance of Tears, "That ſhe would pleaſe to take him and his Family to herſelf; and after that ſhe might diſpoſe as ſhe pleaſed of all the Goods his Father had left him." But neither would ſhe conſent to this, but perſiſted in her Reſolution, of ſuing him at the Parliament of *Dijon*. This he might have prevented, and never ſtirred out of *Paris*, but in reſpect to her, he declined it, and determined to go to *Dijon*.

13. Being come thither, he found all Mens Minds fully prejudiced againſt him, which he gladly endured, that he might be Partaker of the Reproach, and honour the Abaſement of the Son of GOD. And when a Perſon of Piety acquainted him with the ſtrange Reports which were there ſpread abroad concerning him, he with admirable Calmneſs raiſed his Heart to GOD, and humbled himſelf before him. She aſked, Whether it was true that injurious Papers had been put in againſt his Mother? He anſwered, "No; he had ſeen all the Writings, and found them drawn with the Reſpect due to a Parent." She aſked further, "If he was not much afflicted at her harſh Manner of proceeding againſt him?" He ſaid "No; becauſe I ſo much adore the Order of GOD over me, that I cannot be afflicted at that which he permits to befal me. I am a great Sinner, and therefore not only my Mother, but all the World have juſt Cauſe to take Part againſt me."

14. She

14. She adds in a Memorial, that many Ways were propoſed for adjuſting the Difference, but that it was the greateſt Difficulty in the World to bring his Mother to join in any: That in the midſt of theſe Delays, ſhe ſaid to M. *de Renty*, "Sir, I ſhall willingly ſay the *Te Deum*, when once your Buſineſs is ended." And that one Day when they believed it would be wholly concluded, he came to her with a chearful Countenance, and ſaid, "It is now Time to ſay the *Te Deum*, ſince you had the Goodneſs to promiſe it. And may I be ſo bold as to deſire to ſay it with you? O what a great and wiſe GOD have we! who knows well how to do all Things, as they ought and when they ought, not according to our Precipitation, but his Order, which is our Sanctification!" Hereupon he ſaid the *Te Deum*, with a Spirit ſo elevated to GOD, as gave ſufficient Evidence of his being wholly filled with Him. And when afterwards all was broken off, without Hopes of making up again, he ſaid, "It is well; though nothing be done, it was very fit to return Thanks to GOD, for doing his own Will, and not that of a Sinner, unworthy to be heard or regarded."

15. There paſſed many other Things at *Dijon*, and ſince at *Paris*, during theſe Differences, even to the Death of his Mother. But I doubt not he who is now in the Place of perfect Charity, approves of my paſſing over in Silence the Failings of her to whom all his Life he bore ſo much Love and Reſpect.

CHAP. V.

His Faith.

1. MR. *de Renty* ſtudied with a particular Care a ſolid Foundation in this Virtue, knowing how all other Virtues depend upon it, as on their Root, their Rule and Meaſure. And he poſſeſſed it in ſo high a Degree, that he was more aſſured of the Preſence of GOD, and the Truth of the Myſteries of Chriſtianity, than of the Shining of the Sun. He truly lived by

Faith: This was the Path wherein he walked, working all by the Spirit thereof. He beheld Things not with his bodily Eyes, but with thoſe that pierced deeper. Conſidering them not according to their preſent Condition, or the Order of Nature; but according to their future and eternal, their Relation to Grace and Glory; regarding nothing but as it was, or might be a Means of his own or others Salvation.

2. Being fortified by this Faith, he was wont to ſay, He felt no Difficulty at all, when (in his younger Years) he was in a State of Dryneſs and Deſertion, wholly deprived of ſenſible Comforts. To which Purpoſe he writes in one of his Letters thus; "We ſeldom meet with Perſons addicted to Prayer, that behave themſelves well under inward Deſertion. They have not Patience to wait for Comfort. They fret themſelves, and hurry this Way and that, as if by their own Means they could procure it, ſeeking for another Support than that of Faith, which alone ſhould ſuffice any Spiritual Man. For *the Juſt ſhould live by Faith*, and on that Foundation reſt, in Expectation of our Saviour, with Patience; knowing theſe ſenſible Comforts are but Supplements to the Littleneſs, and Cordials for the Faintings of our Faith."

3. Animated by this Spirit, he relied not on any Thing that came to him in an extraordinary Way; reſting neither on Viſions, Miracles, Revelations, nor inward Motions, but ſolely on a pure and naked Faith, to carry him to God.

4. He knew our Perfection conſiſts in nothing elſe, but the Renewal of our Soul in Faith, Hope, and Charity: In performing to God the Sacrifices of a lively Faith, a perfect Hope, and fervent Charity. To cultivate and adorn his Soul with theſe, was therefore his conſtant Care; to unite it more and more intimately with God, through Faith working by Love, and to give himſelf up with all his Strength to this hidden and divine Life.

5. Some Years before his Death, he was peculiarly employed in the Contemplation of the Bleſſed Trinity. Whereof he gave this Account to his Spiritual Guide; "I carry about with me ordinarily an experimental

mental Verity, and a Plenitude of the Preſence of the Holy Trinity." And again, "I poſſeſs the Sacred Trinity with a Plenitude of Truth and Clearneſs; and this in ſo pure and vigorous a Manner, that my outward Employment creates me no Diverſion at all." And another Time he writ thus; "JESUS CHRIST worketh the Experience of his Kingdom in my Heart, and I find him there my Lord and my Maſter, and myſelf wholly his. I diſcover now a greater Enlargment of my Heart, but ſuch as I am not able to expreſs; only thus, It is a ſimple but moſt real Sight of the Trinity, continually accompanied with praiſing, bleſſing, and offering all Homage thereto."

CHAP. VI.

His Hope.

1. A Strong Faith cannot but produce a firm Hope and Charity. A true Belief in GOD, what he is in himſelf, and what he is to us, will work a ſtrong Affiance in him, and ardent Charity towards him; as appear'd in M. *de Renty*, who being grounded in Faith, had alſo an undaunted Hope, and inflamed Affections.

2. The Experience of the Power and Mercy of GOD, and Faith in the infinite Merits of our Redeemer, were the Two Pillars on which he built his Hope: And reſting on theſe, he hoped all Things. He uſed to ſay, that when he looked at himſelf, there was nothing ſo little wherein he apprehended not Difficulty. But when he looked upon GOD, he could think nothing difficult, much leſs impoſſible.

3. Accordingly in all Affairs, he relied not upon his own Prudence, Conduct, Care, or any human Strength or Wiſdom, but on GOD alone, ſaying, "When we have done our Duty with great Diffidence in ourſelves, we ought to attend wholly on GOD, and wait his Time." And thus he writ to a Friend, "As for my Children, I leave them in the Hands of the Holy

Jesus, without determining any thing concerning them, not knowing what would befall To-morrow. He giveth me great Confidence in his Protection, which renders me altogether blind, without wiſhing any thing, but being ready for his Will in every thing."

4. Guarded with this perfect Confidence, he fear'd nothing, but remain'd firm and reſolute againſt all Encounters. He walked ſecurely in all Places, at all Times, in the Streets, in the Fields, by Day and by Night; travelling through Woods and Foreſts, reputed dangerous, and frequented by Robbers, without any other Defence than his Truſt in God. A Friend told him one Day, he was afraid to walk in the Evening in the Streets of *Paris* without a Sword, and deſired his Advice; who told him, he had left off wearing a Sword a long Time, and adviſed him, after he had commended the Buſineſs to God by Prayer, to truſt in his Protection; aſſuring himſelf, that his Protection over us, is according to our Reliance upon him."

5. One Day a Scaffold on which he ſtood with his Workmen fell down, and hurt ſeveral of them: But it moved not him; his Spirit remain'd in the ſame Evenneſs as if nothing had happen'd; being ſettled on Him in whom is no Variableneſs, neither Shadow of Turning.

6. Thoſe Words were found in one of his Letters to his Director, "My Soul being armed with Confidence and Love, fears neither the Devil nor Hell, nor all the Stratagems of Man. Neither think I at all on Heaven or Earth, but only how to fulfil the Will of God in every Thing."

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

His Love of GOD.

1. THE Sentiments Mr. *de Renty* had of the Love of GOD, he thus expreſt in a Letter to his Director; "In all I read in the Scripture, I neither underſtand nor find any Thing but this Love. The very *End of the Commandment is Love, out of a ſincere Heart.* And this is acquir'd by Faith in *Chriſt Jeſus*, as the Apoſtle obſerves in the following Words: Faith uniteth us to him, whereby we ſacrifice our Souls and Bodies, thro' his Spirit; which conducteth us to the compleat End of the Law, to deliver us up to GOD, and bring him down to us in Charity, and a gracious inexplicable Union; to whom be Praiſe for ever! *Amen!*

2. Writing to another, he ſays, "I thank our LORD, who hath diſpoſed you to a perfect Self-denial. This is the Way to Love; and our Love of GOD is ſhewn, not ſo much in receiving Gifts and Graces from Him, as in forgetting ourſelves, in renouncing all Things, and ſuffering conſtantly and courageouſly for Him."

3. So inflamed was Mr. *de Renty* with this Love, that all his Thoughts, Words and Works, were the Fruits of it. All his Vertues drew their Original from this: It was the Beginning, and Motive, and End of all. "I cannot conceal from you, ſaid he to a Friend, that I have a Fire in my Heart, which burns and conſumes without ceaſing." And this divine Fire was ſo ardent in his Soul, that the Flames thereof often burſt forth into his Exterior; and he hath owned, that whenever he pronounced the Name of GOD, he taſted ſuch a Sweetneſs as could not be expreſt.

4. One of his Friends aſſures us, "he has often ſeen him ſo inflamed with Love, that he appeared like

one beſide himſelf:" And that he has told him, when theſe Tranſports were upon him, he was ready to caſt himſelf into the Fire, to teſtify his Love of God. And one of his Letters he concludes thus: "I muſt now hold my Peace; yet when I ceaſe to ſpeak, the Fire within that conſumes me will not let me reſt. Let us burn then, and burn wholly and in every Part for God. Since we have no Being but by him, why do we not live to him? I ſpeak it aloud, and it would be my Crown of Glory, to ſeal it with my Blood."

5. To another he writes thus: "I know not what your Intent was, in writing thoſe Words, "*My* God *and my All!*" Only you incite me thereby to return the ſame to you and to all Creatures, "My God and my All, my God and my All! My God and my All! Is your Heart full of it, and think you it poſſible I ſhould be ſilent on ſuch an Invitation! Be it known to you, that He is my God and my All; and if you doubt of it, I ſhall ſpeak it a hundred times over. I ſhall add no more, for any Thing elſe is ſuperfluous to him that is truly penetrated with "My God and my All."

6. This Love of God wrought in him an incredible Zeal for his Honour, which he thus expreſſes to his Director; "One Day being tranſported with an earneſt Deſire to be All to God, and all conſumed for Him, I offered up to him all I could, yea, and all I could not. I would willingly, if they had been mine, have made a Deed of Gift to Him of Heaven and Earth: And, in another way, I would gladly have been the loweſt of all Mankind. Yea, and if ſupported by his Grace, I could have been content, to advance his Glory, to have ſuffered the Pains of the Damn'd. In this Diſpoſition of a calm Zeal, there is no Sort of Martyrdom, no Degree of Greatneſs or Littleneſs, Honour or Diſhonour, that paſs'd not thro' my Soul, and that I would not readily have embraced for the Advancement of his Glory. It is impoſſible to expreſs one Circumſtance of what I felt. All I could do was, to give up my Liberty to God, writing the Deed in Paper, and ſigning it with my Blood."

7. See

7. See here the Zeal of a Man all on fire with the Love of GOD! And the ſureſt Proof of Love, Conformity to his Will. This intimate Union of his Will with GOD's, the Object and End of all his Actions, was indeed one of his ſingular Graces, as it is the Sum of all Perfection. He writ thus to one concerning the Counteſs of *Châtres*, with whom he had the ſtricteſt Friendſhip; "I muſt own, that during my Abſence from her, my Heart was tenderly ſenſible of her Pain. But my Deſire ſubmits to the Will of GOD, and when that is ſignified, He gives me Grace to obey. I was not at *Paris*, but at *Citry*, when ſhe departed; I was ſent for Poſt, but came two Hours too late. Entering the Town, I ſoon heard the News of her Death. Preſently I fixt myſelf to the Will of GOD; whereupon I found no more Alteration in my Soul, than if ſhe had been alive. I ſee his Order in this, that I aſſiſted her not at her Death, and doubt not but he permitted it for her Advantage."

8. Another Time he writ thus: "I have theſe three Weeks had a Fever, with a Defluxion, and an extreme Weakneſs. My Frame of Mind, during this Condition, has been a ſimple Adherence to the Will of GOD. I have a Heart Willing and ready to receive any Afflictions that can befall me. I deſire whatever is decreed from above, and beg it with all my Heart."

9. In the Year 1641, one of his Children, whom he tenderly loved, died. When the News was brought him, he ſpoke not one Word, nor ſhewed the leaſt Sign of Diſturbance; His Affection to the Child yielding to his abſolute Conformity with the Will of GOD.

10. At the End of the Year 1643, his Lady fell deſperately ſick, ſo that ſhe was given over by her Phyſicians, and left ſpeechleſs and without Senſe. This affected him in the moſt ſenſible Part; and he broke out into theſe Words:

"I cannot deny but my Nature is deeply affected with the Senſe of ſo great a Loſs; yet my Spirit is filled with ſo wonderful a Joy, to ſee myſelf in ſuch a State, as to give up, and ſacrifice to my GOD, a Thing ſo near and dear to me, that if Decency did not forbid it, I would give ſome open Teſtimony of my Readi-

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neſs thereto." Hereby he evidenced the Will of God to be ſo abſolutely his, that he not only willed whatever God willed, but alſo willed it as God doth, with Pleaſure and Satisfaction. But it pleaſed God to reſtore his Lady to her Health, with reſpect (as we may believe) to the Carriage of his faithful Servant.

11. From this perfect Subordination to the Will of God, ſprung his admirable Tranquility; from this Fountain flowed thoſe Rivers of Peace which he poſſeſs'd in ſo great Perfection, that on the moſt ſudden Surprizals, his Spirit was not alter'd, nor put into any Diſorder. So that he could ſay from the Abundance of his Heart, "I comprehend not that Thing you call Mortification. He who finds no Reſiſtance in his Spirit to any thing, is not capable of it. Whoſo willeth whatſoever God willeth, is pleaſed, whatſoever happens."

12. With this Love of God was joined ſo deep a Reverence of Him, as often caſt him into trembling. And this unſpeakable Reſpect unto God's Greatneſs, cauſed him often to walk in the Fields bare-headed, even in Rain, or the Heat of the Sun: And being aſked by a Friend, what it was that kept him in that conſtant Awe, and how he attain'd that wonderful Reverence he bore to God at all Times, in all Places, in all Employments, he anſwered, "The Sight of his Glorious Majeſty, which continually ſeems preſent by me, keeps me in exceeding Awe, with a deep Senſe of his Greatneſs and my own Vileneſs. A Mote in the Sun is little, but I am far leſs in the Preſence of God."

13. And ſure it is, that this deep Senſe of his own Vileneſs, before the Majeſty of God, well becomes not only the greateſt of Sinners, but the holieſt Man upon Earth. He that from a Valley beholds the Sun when it riſes, and appears on the Point of a high Mountain, may think him that ſtands above to be near it, and almoſt able to reach it with his Hand. But the ſame Man notwithſtanding beholds it at a vaſt Diſtance above his Head. And though, in Reality, he is nearer than the other that ſtands in the Valley, yet the

the Proportion is ſo ſmall as ſcarce deſerves to be named, in reſpect to the total Diſtance.

14. This Reverence of GOD occaſioned in him a great Reverence likewiſe to whatſoever was devoted to Him: As firſt, to all holy Places; at his Entrance into a Church, his Demeanor was highly modeſt and ſerious. He never ſat down there. He would remain in it as long as poſſibly he could; ſometimes ſeven or eight Hours together. If any Perſon ſpoke to him in a Church, his Anſwer was ſhort; if a longer was requir'd, he went out and gave it.

15. He had great Reſpect, ſecondly, to holy Perſons, eſpecially to Prieſts, whom he highly honour'd for their Works ſake. Whenever he met them, he ſaluted them with profound Humility, and in his Travel would alight off his Horſe to do it. When they viſited him, he entertain'd them with great Reſpect; at their going, waiting on them to the Gate: And if any dined at his Table, he gave them the upper Hand, which Civility he obſerv'd to his own Chaplain.

16. And as he had this Reverence for them, ſo had he an earneſt Deſire, that they might live according to the Dignity of their Calling. When he ſaw any who did not, he profeſt his Heart melted into Sorrow for them, and that he proſtrated himſelf before our Saviour, and begged with Tears ſome Apoſtolical Spirits. He often ſaid, "Give us, O LORD, our poor Fiſhermen. Men, ſimple in Appearance, and vile in the Eyes of Men; but great and holy within, and fit to convert Souls by their Sanctity, Prayers, and reſtleſs Labours! And herein I diſcover a great Miſtake ordinary in the World, That outward Greatneſs and Pomp is the way to keep up Mens Credit, and make them more capable of doing Good to their Neighbours. O, no! It is Grace that hath Power upon Souls, and an holy and humble Life that gaineth Hearts!"

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

His Love of Man.

SECT. I.

Of his Love to Man in general.

1. THE grand Exercise of M. *de Renty*, was to apply and unite himself to our Saviour, and from that Union and Example to derive all his Virtues and Good Works. To mould himself after him was his general Course, both in his inward Tempers and outward Behaviour. He never took his Eye off of this Divine Copy, but endeavoured to draw every Line exactly, to pencil his true Likeness, and make him his native and perfect Original.

2. This was the Scope of all his Designs and Cares, and particularly that of his Charity to his Neighbour; for which he propounded our Saviour as his grand Exemplar, weighing the Affection he shewed for Men; marking what *he* had done, and what *he* had suffered for them, how *he* sought after, and conversed with them; how *he* instructed, comforted, and encouraged them, sometimes reproving, sometimes bearing with their Infirmities; at all Times carrying them in his Bosom, yea, in the most intimate Inclosure of his Heart.

3. He well weighed what CHRIST had delivered concerning this Virtue: That he had established it as the Perfection of his Law; that he had termed this Command peculiarly His own; that he had expressly and solemnly bequeathed it to his Followers, and enforced the Execution of it upon them by all the strongest and most endearing Ties; that he had made this Virtue the distinctive Character of those who were in

in Reality his Diſciples; and that he had charged us to love our Neighbour, according to the Model, Meaſure, and Faſhion that he had loved us. And accordingly he determined, as far as he could, to love his Neighbour with the Bent and Spirit of his Maſter. "I ſigh (ſaid he) after my Saviour JESUS, deſiring to imitate and follow Him whither he pleaſeth. I beſeech you, by your Prayers, obtain for me his Spirit, to be my Life, my whole Life. Sigh and groan for me after my GOD, that I may be wholly for Him in his Son, that I may follow Him, and not live but by his Spirit."

4. Agreeably to this he endeavoured, in all the Commerce he had with Men, to unite himſelf moſt intimately to our Saviour, giving himſelf up as an Inſtrument to be guided by his Hand in the helping of others, beſeeching him to breathe upon him his Spirit of Love, recommended ſo much in his Word, but more in his Actions, and to inflame him with this ſacred Fire which he hath kindled in his Church, that he might be wholly conſumed with it. He conſulted him in all his Doubts concerning it, begging him to inſpire what, and how, and when, he ſhould ſpeak and act for the Good of his Neighbour; and that in him and by him it might all be done.

5. He looked upon Men not according to their natural Qualities, their Beauty, Nobility, Riches, or Worldly Diſtinctions, but according to their more noble Relations, and thoſe common to all, *viz.* As Creatures divine, the lively Images of GOD, formed to praiſe and love him to all Eternity; as purpled in the Blood of JESUS, Brothers and Co-heirs with Him, his Inheritance bought with the Price of his Life, and a thouſand Pangs, and who therefore muſt be infinitely dear unto him, and moſt tenderly beloved of him.

6. In this Capacity it was that he beheld Men, and applied to their Neceſſities. And hereby as he was highly uſeful to his Neighbour, ſo he did not prejudice but greatly advantage himſelf. He looked upon GOD and CHRIST in every Man. He conſidered, it was they that demanded Succour of him. And while

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he was performing with all his Might whatever was neceſſary for the Soul or Body of the leaſt of his Brethren, believed verily it was GOD and CHRIST to whom he rendered that Aſſiſtance. And the ſame Thought ſhould all make Uſe of, who would benefit their Neighbour, without Prejudice to themſelves. Otherwiſe, a Man ſhall ſooner loſe his own Soul, than lead another to GOD.

7. The Charity of this Man of GOD, built on theſe Foundations, was ſo enlarged, that it ſeemed to have no Bounds; in that he loved not only all Chriſtians, but all Men, without excepting any. *Thy Commandment*, ſays *David*, *is exceeding broad*; the ſame Dimenſions had his Charity; embracing the Preſent and Abſent, Domeſticks and Strangers, Friends and Enemies, Good and Bad; eſteeming all according to their Degree, ſpeaking (as he could) well of all, doing Good to all, and Ill to none.

8. There was not any conſiderable good Work of a publick Nature, done at *Paris*, or within a great Diſtance of it, wherein he had not a great Share. There was no Undertaking there, tending to the Honour of GOD, or Good of Men, of which he was not either the Author, or Promoter, or Finiſher, and very often all theſe together. He was one at all the Meetings of Piety; and of many the very Soul. He kept Correſpondence throughout the whole Kingdom, concerning Works of Charity, receiving Letters from all Parts, deſiring his Advice in all Difficulties that occurred, in the erecting or perfecting Hoſpitals, Seminaries of Religion, and Fraternities of vertuous Perſons, aſſociating together for the better applying themſelves to their own and others Salvation, and the managing all Sorts of Good Works.

9. From *Caen* one writes of him thus: "Mr. *de Renty* was our Support and Refuge in the Execution of all our Deſigns, relating to the Service of GOD, the Saving of Souls, and the Relief of the Poor and Diſtreſſed. To him we continually wrote, and from him we received Counſel and Succour on all Occaſions. Nor have we met with any ſince his Death to whom we could have the like Recourſe in the Things

of

of GOD." Another from *Dijon* writes thus: "We cannot but acknowledge the great Benefit this Province has received from Mr. *de Renty*. Wherever he came he hath wonderfully advanced all Works of Piety. We may truly ſay, that his Days were filled with the Fulneſs of GOD. Nor do we believe he loſt one Minute of Time, in which he did not either ſpeak or act ſomething for his Service."

10. He applied himſelf to the Neceſſities of the *Engliſh*, the *Iriſh*, the Captives in *Barbary*, and of the Miſſions into the *Levant*; took great Pains for the Support of the Hoſpital at *Marſeilles*; laboured much for the Relief of Galley-Slaves, and contributed much to the advancing the Affairs of *New-France* in *America*. He had a Deſign likewiſe to purge all Trades and Manufactures from the Corruptions which had grown upon them, ſo that Men might live upon them like Chriſtians; which Thing he begun and perfected in two of them.

11. The Scripture he moſt ſtudied, next the Life of our bleſſed Saviour, to qualify himſelf for all good Works, was St. *Paul*'s Deſcription of Charity, in the 13th Chapter of his Firſt Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*. And whoſoever is exerciſed in the Virtues there deſcribed, will not run in vain, nor labour in vain. Indeed the more any one is animated with this Spirit, the more ſhall he advance Holineſs in others. Yea, tho' his Words be few and ordinary. For our Words do not derive their Force from the Mouth that ſpeaks, but from the Diſpoſition of the Heart, and the Power of the Spirit that dwells there.

12. To qualify himſelf to be more extenſively uſeful to his Neighbour, Mr. *de Renty*, to the natural Abilities GOD had given him, and to the Learning he had acquir'd in his Youth, had by his Induſtry added ſeveral ſmaller Parts of Knowledge: And that not only for his own Uſe, but to teach them to others, whereby to help themſelves. Yea, he abaſed himſelf to learn the meaneſt Skill, which might be any way uſeful to his Neighbour. One Day in *Paris* he carried a Friend with him to a poor Man, who got his Living by making Wicker-baſkets. He there finiſh'd

a Baſket which he had begun ſome Days before, with Deſign as ſoon as he had learned it, to teach ſome poor People in the Country to make them, to help to get their Living. He then left the Baſket with the poor Man, and a Piece of Money for teaching him.

13. Indeed he took upon him all Shapes, tranſformed himſelf into all Figures, condeſcended to all Things for the Good of his Neighbour: All his Thoughts, Words and Actions, being wholly caſt in the Mould of Charity: Which made him ſay one Day, "Methinks my Soul is all Charity, and I am not able to expreſs with what Ardour and ſtrange Expanſion my Heart is renewed in the Divine Life of my Saviour, burning in Love to all Mankind."

SECT. II.

His Charity to the Poor.

1. WITH regard to the Poor, Mr. *de Renty*'s Thoughts ſtayed not on their Habit or outward Appearance; but paſſing further, he beheld under theſe, with the Eye of Faith, JESUS CHRIST preſent and dwelling in them. And as he burned with an ardent Affection to our LORD, ſo he loved them tenderly, ſuccoured them with all his Might, and left nothing unattempted for their Sakes. And with theſe Eyes, not thoſe of Nature, muſt every one behold the Poor, that will love them indeed, and have Bowels of Compaſſion for them.

2. From the Year 1641, he invited to Dinner two poor Men twice a Week, on *Tueſdays* and *Fridays*. But Increaſe of Buſineſs obliged him five or ſix Years after to reduce it to one Day, commonly *Thurſday*; when he invited three; and willing to join ſpiritual Alms to corporal, he ſought out ſuch as ſeemed moſt to need Inſtruction. To this End, while at *Paris*, after his Morning Devotions, he went to St. *Anthony*'s Gate,

and

and took ſuch as were newly arrived, whom courteouſly ſaluting, he brought home (in Winter to the Fire) made them ſit down, and with a cordial Affection, which appeared in his whole Behaviour, inſtructed them in the chief Points of Chriſtianity. While they ſat at Table, he ſerved them himſelf, ſetting before them with his own Hands the Diſhes brought in by his Servants and Children. After Dinner, he waited on them himſelf to the Gate, and diſmiſſed them with an Alms. This he continued to his Death, and when he could not do it in Perſon, his Lady did the ſame to ſo many poor Women.

3. Beſides many other Charities at his own Houſe, he endeavoured the general Relief of all the Poor in *Paris*, and the Parts adjacent; buſied himſelf to underſtand their Wants, ſtudied Ways of Redreſs, and carefully purſued them. What he could not accompliſh himſelf, he commended to others, ſpake for them, begged for them, bought Neceſſaries for them; laboured to eſtabliſh ſettled Courſes of Living for Men and Children that were deſtitute, and when he could not at preſent provide for them abroad, maintained them at his own Houſe till he could.

4. He was the firſt that motioned ſome Relief for the poor *Engliſh*, driven by Perſecution out of their own Country. He engaged Perſons of Quality in the purchaſing of Lands for their Subſiſtence. When it was done, himſelf undertook the Charge of diſtributing one Part of this Charity. This he performed monthly, going to them a-foot, and commonly alone. Entering their Chamber, he ſaluted them with all Tenderneſs and Reſpect, and gave them their Allowance wrapt up in a Paper.

5. In all his Viſits to the Poor, after a general Survey of their Wants, he examined in particular as well their ſpiritual as bodily Neceſſities; and endeavoured in the firſt Place to mark their Inclinations, their Paſſions, their ill Habits; what Vices were predominant in them, and what were their chief Infirmities: that like a prudent Phyſician he might apply fit Remedies, and teach them how to make the true Uſe of their Poverty.

6. As to their temporal Neceſſities, he conſidered the Capacity, Induſtry, Trade or Employment of each: For Tradeſmen, he conſidered what Tools or Materials were neceſſary to ſet them to work. Theſe he provided, either redeeming their own, or buying new. He then gave them Proviſions for two or three Days, and provided them Work not only for themſelves, but alſo for their Wives and Children. Afterwards he bought ſome of their Work, which he beſtowed in Alms upon others, and took Order for the quick Sale of the reſt; coming to them from Time to Time to ſee if all went well, and encourage them to take Pains.

7. To theſe we may add, his Charity to poor Priſoners, whom he viſited, comforted, and relieved, and when he found it expedient for them, (which he always firſt conſidered) uſed all Means for their Enlargement.

8. There was in *Low Normandy* one who had been a Priſoner for ſeveral Years, and tho' innocent, was in great Extremity. Many had endeavour'd his Releaſe, but without Succeſs, becauſe of a powerful Adverſary. The Thing being commended to Mr. *de Renty*, after a juſt Information of the Caſe, he committed the Proſecution of it to his own Advocate, made a Report of it to the Council, and went frequently in Perſon to ſollicit it.

9. But notwithſtanding, perceiving the poor Man's Cauſe to hang long, he changed his Purpoſe, and writ to his Adverſary, offering, if the Buſineſs might be referred to him, to take a Journey into *Normandy* immediately. When he came to the Town, he went directly to the Priſon, and after an Exhortation to the Priſoners, ſeconded by his Alms, he told the poor Man his Deſign, and exhorted him to pray to GOD for a Bleſſing on his Endeavours, and to reſt in Hope that by ſome Means or other he ſhould ſhortly be delivered.

10. He then went to the other's Houſe; whence he returned to the Priſon for Information on ſome Difficulties that occurred. Finding all the Priſoners together at their uſual Devotions, he waited till they had

had done. Having then received Information, he went back to the other, with whom he came to ſuch an Agreement, that this poor Man, after a world of Miſery, during 9 Years Impriſonment, was at length ſet at Liberty. He maintained him eight Days at his own Houſe, adviſing and exhorting him every Evening: and at his Departure perſuaded him to go and ſee his (former) Adverſary; whom he now found as tractible and friendly, as before he had been ſevere.

SECT. III.

His Charity to the Sick.

1. IF his Charity to the Poor was thus great, it was ſtill greater to ſuch Poor as were ſick. He was not content to aſſiſt theſe in one or two Ways; but they found in him, and often in one Viſit, a Benefactor, a Phyſician, Apothecary, Surgeon, a Paſtor, Friend and Servant.

2. In the Year 1641, he learned to let Blood, and ſeveral Parts of Surgery. He acquainted himſelf likewiſe with the Manner of making up moſt Sorts of Medicines; and he conſulted with the Phyſician, by whom he was inſtructed in the principal Parts of the Art of Phyſick. Whenever he went abroad, he had with him a Surgeon's Box, and Powders for the Cure of moſt ordinary Diſeaſes; which he uſed with great Dexterity, and with equal Prudence, never advancing beyond his Knowledge.

3. In his Viſits to the Sick, he never ſhun'd any Service neceſſary for them, and in his Power to perform; as making their Beds, helping them to Bed, making their Fire, ſetling in Order their little Houſhold-ſtuff; hoping thereby to win upon their Affections, and draw them to GOD with more Facility.

4. In every Family he took an Opportunity to enquire whether GOD was ſerved there? And whether any Quarrels or Differences were among them, which he took Care to make up without Delay. And he never left any, without providing for all their Neceſſities, which he took Notice of with incredible Diligence, Sweetneſs, and Reſpect; diſpenſing with other Buſineſs, that he might have Time to hear all their Complaints.

5. Neither did he only viſit the Sick, but they alſo ſought him, and would find him out whereſoever he came, if they were able to go abroad. The Sick, the Weak, the Lame, or otherwiſe infirm, flock'd to him from all Quarters: He might often be ſeen encompaſs'd with them; ſome requeſting his Medicines, ſome his Alms, ſome his Counſel. He treated all, as a true Diſciple of his great Maſter, with the like diffuſive Charity; and ſtood in the Midſt of them with the like Goodneſs and Patience, endeavouring to do Good, and to miniſter Comfort to all.

6. Nor did his Charity decline the Care of thoſe Diſeaſes which Nature cannot behold without Horror and Averſion. During his Stay at *Dijon*, he was informed of one, who having been among a Company of Soldiers, was left by them in ſo noiſome a Condition, that none would come near her, and the Houſe where ſhe lodged was going to turn her out of Doors. He went inſtantly to the Houſe, perſuaded them to keep her there, and hired a Woman to attend her. Then he provided her proper Phyſick and Nouriſhment, which he brought her with his own Hands: In the mean Time, reading to her every Day, inſtructing and comforting her. By this Means he at length not only retrieved her from the Jaws of Death, but induced her to ſpend the reſt of her Life in a vertuous and Chriſtian Manner.

SECT.

SECT. IV.

His Zeal for the Salvation of his Neighbour.

1. MR. *de Renty* being continually inflamed with the Love of GOD, inceſſantly ſought all Ways, and uſed all Means to make him more known and loved by all Men, both here and eternally. And this his Zeal had no Bounds; it extended not only to all *France*, but to all the World; inſomuch that he ſaid to an intimate Friend, "I am ready to ſerve all Men, not excepting One, and to lay down my Life for any one." He earneſtly deſired to enlighten with the Knowledge of GOD, and inflame with his Love, the whole World; of which *Paris* being as it were an Epitome, he went thro' all the Quarters and Streets of that vaſt City, ſearching out what he could remove, or bring in, for the Glory of GOD, and Salvation of Souls. And the ſame Spirit which moved him hereto, bleſt his Endeavours to rectify what was amiſs, and to ſtrengthen what was right. This he did in ſo many ſeveral Ways, as a Man would think it impoſſible: But what cannot a Man do that is zealous, diſintereſted, and full of GOD?

2. He performed what poſſibly he could in his own Perſon, not ſparing any Pains, nor loſing one Moment: And where his Power fell ſhort, he engaged others: And in all Places he labour'd, as much as in him lay, to induce ſuch as deſired to follow CHRIST, to join together, and aſſiſt one another in working out both their own and their Neighbour's Salvation. Many ſuch Societies he eſtabliſh'd at *Caen*, at *Amiens*, at *Dijon*, and in ſeveral Parts of *Burgundy*; whoſe Endeavours being animated by a true Zeal for GOD, were bleſs'd with unexpected Succeſs.

3. To

3. To arm one who was thus engaged, againſt the Difficulties he met with, he writ to him thus:

"I am very ſenſible of the preſent Storms that you endure; though there is no Reaſon why Men ſhould alarm you thus, ſeeing they have no Cauſe of Reproach from your Deſign, nor have you done any thing againſt the Goſpel; yet I do not wonder at theſe Croſſes. 'Tis ſufficient to know that you deſire to follow JESUS CHRIST; therefore you muſt reckon Contradiction to be your Portion in theſe Days of your Fleſh; only be firm in your Confidence in our LORD, ſuffering none of theſe Storms to trouble you, or to obſcure that Light which hath moved you to, and guarded you in this Buſineſs. GOD deliver you from the Reaſonings of Fleſh and Blood, which at ſuch Times are apt to multiply upon us: Be aſſured, that if you hearken not to them, GOD will manifeſt himſelf unto you; he will comfort and fortify you in Faith, and in Experience of the Gift of his Holy Spirit."

4. To another he writ thus: "Bleſſed for ever be the Holy JESUS, for the good Beginning of thoſe you mention. If the other had a little more Courage to break her Fetters, it would be a great Step: And ſurely there needs not ſo much Deliberation to give up ourſelves to him, although he be to the *Jews* a Stumbling-block, and to the *Greeks* Fooliſhneſs. Not that GOD hath any Need of our good Parts or excellent Qualities, who commonly confounds the Wiſdom of the Wiſe, by little Things which he chuſeth. Bleſſed be that Littleneſs which is accounted Weakneſs, and yet overthroweth all the Power and Prudence of the World."

5. We mention'd before his Endeavour to reform Trades from the Abuſes and Corruptions which, in Proceſs of Time, they had contracted, and to ſanctify them, that ſome at leaſt in each might live like the primitive Chriſtians, in common; deducting from their Stock only their neceſſary Maintenance, and beſtowing the reſt on the Poor. And, at length, he in Part effected it; ſo that there are now two Companies in *Paris*, one of Taylors, the other of Shoemakers, and of theſe in ſeveral Quarters of the City, (and the like there

there are at *Thouloufe*) who live in Community; riſing, eating, working, and praying together Morning and Evening; calling each other Brothers, and living together in the ſtricteſt Unity and Concord.

6. Paſſing one Day by the Hoſpital of St. *Gervaſe*, and hearing it was devoted to the Lodging of poor Travellers, he deſired Leave of the Superior to inſtruct them, in the Evening when they were met together. And this he did from that Time every Night, coming thither on Foot, and commonly alone, Summer and Winter. After inſtructing them, he joined with them in Prayer, which he concluded with his Alms. And this he continued many Years, till ſome Churchmen, moved by his Example, undertook that Work, which they continue to this Day.

7. His Tenderneſs of Heart to theſe poor People was exceeding great, joined with ſuch Humility as cannot eaſily be expreſſed. When he met any one at the Hoſpital, he ſaluted him with great Reſpect, put him before him, and talked with him bare-headed. If any kneeled to him, he did the like to them, and continued on his Knees till they roſe firſt. One of them obſerving him diligently, and knowing him to be the Lord of the Place where he himſelf lived, was deeply affected at the Sight, and came and fell at his Feet: Mr. *de Renty* did the like to him, and continued in that Poſture a long Time, reſolving not to riſe before the poor Man.

8. Going one Day to viſit the Holy Place of *Montmatre*, after his Prayers ſaid in the Church, he retired into a deſolate Part of the Mountain, near a little Spring. There he kneeled down to Prayer, and that ended, dined on a Piece of Bread and a Draught of Water. After Dinner he took out his Teſtament, and read a Chapter on his Knees, bare-headed, with extraordinary Reverence. Juſt then came a poor Man, ſaying his Prayers. Mr. *de Renty* roſe up to ſalute him, and fell into a Diſcourſe with him concerning GOD, and that ſo powerfully, that the poor Man ſtriking his Breaſt, fell down upon the Ground to adore that great GOD. Immediately after, came a poor Maid to draw Water at the Well, whom he aſked,

What

What ſhe was? She anſwered, a Servant. "But do you know, ſaid he, you are a Chriſtian, and to what End you was created?" Whence he took Occaſion ſo to inſtruct her, that confeſſing ſhe had never before thought of the End of her Creation, ſhe promiſed from thenceforth deeply to conſider, and ſeriouſly to purſue it.

9. In his firſt Return from *Dijon*, he ſtopped three or four Times in the Way, to inſtruct the poor Paſſengers; and once went out of the Road, to ſhew ſome Labourers in the Field, how to ſanctify the Work they were about.

10. A young Maid in *Paris*, having been very cruelly uſed by her Uncle, fell into ſuch a Diſorder, that in a Fury ſhe accuſed our Saviour as the Cauſe of her Miſery, for abandoning her to ſuch a Man. In this horrible Condition, ſhe received the Sacrament ſeveral Times in a Day; on purpoſe to do Deſpight to our Saviour, and provoke him to finiſh her Deſtruction. Mr. *de Renty* was no ſooner informed of this, than he haſted to find her out; as he did, after eight Days Search, in the very Act of communicating. He immediately conveyed her thence, and took ſo great Care both of her Soul and Body, that ſhe returned to herſelf, and gave ample Teſtimonies of her Repentance.

11. As the Deſign of advancing the Salvation of Men, is attended with much doing and much ſuffering, it is neceſſary for him that undertakes it, to fortify himſelf with Courage and Patience; and both theſe were moſt eminently in Mr. *de Renty*, being, in the firſt Place, full of Courage, reſolute, and laborious; employing his Body as if he had Two more in Reſerve when that was ſpent; diſpatching more Buſineſs in one Half-Hour, than others did in many Days. Very bold he was in entering upon Difficulties, and quick in extricating himſelf from them.

12. A Lady who had left much to pious Uſes, made him her Executor. Being informed her Friends, Men of eminent Power, were much diſpleaſed, he reply'd, "I never moved her to beſtow any of her Eſtate this Way; but ſince her Piety has prompted her to it, I ſhall not be diſmay'd with any Power that ſhall oppoſe it:

it: My Care is to perform her Will, and for other Things I take no Thought."

13. Seeing one Day ſome Gentlemen fighting, he threw himſelf between their Swords, laying hold on thoſe who ſeemed moſt outrageous. At firſt they quarrelled with him; but in a ſhort time were Friends, both with him, and with one another.

14. His Zeal was accompanied, ſecondly, with unparallel'd Patience; a Virtue highly requiſite for him that would ſave the Souls of Men; ſeeing he muſt endeavour to win their Hearts, at which he is to make his firſt Entrance; not following his own Will or Inclinations, but theirs; becoming all Things to all Men; waiting long for their Converſion, and attending (without being tired and diſcouraged, tho' by all his Labour he ſhould win but little Ground) the favourable Moments wherein they may yield to his Motives. He muſt, like this holy Man, not only be willing to endure Hunger, Thirſt, Heat, Cold, Wet, Wearineſs, and other outward Pains, inſeparably attendant on Employments of this Nature; but alſo the Importunities, Complaints, Paſſions, the Repulſes, the Contempts and Injuries that are continually to be expected in them.

15. While he was employ'd in inſtructing the poor Travellers in the Hoſpital of St. *Gervaſe*, a Man who was ſettled there, looking upon it as an Intruſion into his Office, came to him, as he was in the midſt of the Poor, and with many injurious and reproachful Words, forbad him to come any more. Mr. *de Renty* having heard him without any Emotion, replied, "The poor People had much Need of Inſtruction; and ſince he would not be at the Pains of it himſelf, he prayed him not to hinder one that would." This did not ſatisfy him at all, but he came four Days together to drive out Mr. *de Renty*, interrupting him as ſoon as he began; but he ſtill received him with the ſame Spirit, and at length overcame Evil with Good.

16. One Day he viſited a Perſon who, from a groundleſs Suſpicion, had cruelly uſed his Wife; who underſtanding his Buſineſs, entertained him very courſely, giving him much opprobrious Language, lifting up his Hand to ſtrike him, and offering to thruſt him out of Doors.

Doors. Mr. *de Renty* replied not one Word, but after ſome Time, drew near again, embraced him, and accoſted him with ſuch ſoft Language, that he was perſwaded, at length, to go to Confeſſion, which he had not done in twelve Years before, and to be fully reconciled to his Wife; inſomuch that he lived and died a good Chriſtian.

17. Another Time, viſiting a poor old Man that was ſick, he began, as uſual, to ſpeak of Spiritual Things. But the old Man, inſtead of liſtning, fell into a Paſſion, telling him, He underſtood thoſe Things better than he. Mr. *de Renty* told him, he would be glad to be inſtructed; and after a great deal of Patience, and Attention, taking Advantage from ſome Things in that weak Diſcourſe, to convince and inform him better, he proceeded ſo happily, that the reſt of his Days he led a truly Chriſtian Life.

18. His Patience in bearing with the Faults and Imperfections of others, as it was truly exemplary, ſo it never took away, or weakened his Deſire to correct them, for which he only waited a proper Occaſion. When he intended to reprove another, he commonly firſt accuſed himſelf, to prepare them by his Example. Having ſuch an Intention, he began a Diſcourſe of that Openneſs with which Chriſtians ought to tell one another the Truth; for want of which we grow grey in our Vices, and often carry them with us to our Graves; ſaying, "He ſhould hold himſelf extreamly obliged to any who would ſhew him that Kindneſs." His Friend finding his Heart exceedingly ſoftened, beſought him to deal freely and plainly with him, in telling him whatſoever he ſaw amiſs in him; which Thing then he did.

19. But his Patience did not in the leaſt break in upon that Fortitude, which is often requiſite in the Things of God, for the Good of our Neighbour, and for the worthy preſerving of our juſt Authority. He knew Severity muſt be uſed ſometimes, eſpecially when we have to do with ſtubborn Offenders; and accordingly adviſed a Friend, concerning a third Perſon, "Take heed of humbling yourſelf before that Man; the abaſing of yourſelf in this Caſe, would both prejudice

judice him, and the Cauſe of GOD. Reprove him ſeverely and roundly."

20. And not in theſe Inſtances only, but in all others, his Zeal was accompanied both with Freedom and Prudence. For though his Humility has concealed many of his inward Graces and outward Actions, yet many likewiſe has his Zeal brought to Light, where he judged it neceſſary for the Glory of GOD, or the Good of his Neighbour: Concerning which he thus wrote to a virtuous Lady:

"Give me Leave to ſpeak my Thoughts of that Liberty we ought to uſe, in communicating freely the Gifts of GOD beſtowed upon us, to ſuch Perſons as may reap Fruit from them; not ſtifling them in ourſelves, whereby we obſtruct a ſecond Fruit, which GOD expects from his Graces. We ſhould conſider ourſelves ſet in the World as a Chriſtal, which, placed in the Middle of the Univerſe, would give free Paſſage to all the Light which it receives from above: So ought we to impart all the Talents we receive, and this without Diſguiſe, or the leaſt Claim of Propriety.

"Farther: As the Chryſtal, if ſeveral Torches were ſet under it, would tranſmit the Beams of them all towards Heaven; ſo whatever Honours or Commendations we receive from below, ſhould freely paſs thro' us up to GOD; for GOD hath therefore beſtowed upon us ſuch Things as are Praiſe-worthy, not that the Praiſe thereof ſhould reſt upon us, but that it may paſs thro' us to Him, that he may be bleſſed and praiſed in all Things."

21. Yet his Zeal, tho' free, was not ſo indiſcreet, as to be its own Herald upon every Appearance of doing Good; but was very circumſpect in weighing all Circumſtances. Accordingly, in the ſame Letter, he gives this wiſe Advice, touching the Order and Meaſure which are neceſſary to be obſerved in this Communication.

"To ſome we muſt lay open our Hearts freely and exactly; to others more reſervedly; to others altogether lock'd up, concealing from them what we ſee no Diſpoſition in them to make a good Uſe of."

22. Zeal indeed ſhould be always attended with Prudence, to conſider Things well, and execute them in the beſt Manner; to prevent Miſchiefs, or redreſs them, with as much of Sweetneſs, and as little Acrimony as poſſible: And in deſperate Caſes, or where the Cure would prove worſe than the Diſeaſe, to ſuffer and paſs them over; ſome Souls having Defects, as it were, incorrigible, which GOD permits to perfect them by Humility; and others likewiſe, that have an Intercourſe with them, by Patience and Charity.

23. One great Point of Prudence requiſite in a zealous Man, is, neither to hurt his Body by too much Labour, nor his Mind with too much Buſineſs. As to the latter of theſe, Mr. *de Renty* took eſpecial Care, ſo to manage all his Works of Charity, that his Piety might not be hinder'd but advanced thereby, indiſpenſibly performing all his Exerciſes of Devotion; and while he converſed moſt with his Neighbour, reſerving a conſiderable Part, both of the Day and Night, for converſing with GOD. As to the other, he thus expreſs'd himſelf to a Clergyman, who had impaired his Health by extreme Labour:

"Give me Leave, Sir, to tell you plainly, that you ſhould not impoſe too much upon yourſelf, leſt for want of Moderation, you render yourſelf altogether unſerviceable. The Enemy uſually takes no ſmall Advantage of ſuch free and well-diſpoſed Natures; you are not your own, but a Debtor to all Men. Preſerve yourſelf therefore, not by indulging your Body, but by laying upon it no more than it is able to bear."

24. Being at *Citry*, in the latter End of the Year 1642, he had a ſtrong Impreſſion upon his Spirit, that at his Return to *Paris*, he ſhould find a new Employment about the Poor, and be much taken up therein. Accordingly, two Days after his Return thither, ſome Perſons came to adviſe with him, about a Courſe of relieving all ſuch Poor in the City, as were aſhamed to beg. He undertook to viſit a fourth Part of them, and to aſſiſt them according to their Neceſſities. An Employment ſufficient to take up the whole Time of one Man, which yet he perform'd, notwithſtanding the Multitude of his other Occupations; ſo that we

muſt ſay, without a ſpecial Aſſiſtance, he could not have done and ſuffer'd what he did; but GOD, who hath limited our Strength of Body, can increaſe it when and how he pleaſeth.

25. Sometimes he received before-hand only a preſent Impulſe of ſomething to be done, without any particular Diſcovery. As when he was much preſſed in Spirit to go to *Pontois*, without underſtanding any Reaſon for it; yet, believing it to be the Call of GOD, he immediately undertook the Journey; where unexpectedly he met with a Nobleman of great Quality, who was come from a Province far diſtant, on Purpoſe to be inſtructed by Mr. *de Renty*, how to ſerve GOD, which he had, till then, little known, and leſs practiſed.

26. But though this great Servant of GOD had an excellent Faculty of aſſiſting all, yet was he more eminently aſſiſtant to ſome particular Perſons, for the healing their Souls, and leading them on apace in the narrow Way of Perfection. I ſhall mention One only, the Counteſs of *Châtres*, who being deep in the Affections of the World, as are moſt young Ladies of her Quality, it pleaſed GOD to inſpire her with a Deſire to aſk Advice of Mr. *de Renty*; this he gave her with ſo happy Succeſs, that he himſelf was aſtoniſhed at it. In leſs than a Year, ſhe was ſo perfectly diſengaged from all thoſe little Conveniencies and Accommodations, which our Ladies perſuade themſelves are abſolutely neceſſary, that one offering her ſomething of this Kind, which ſhe was formerly fond of, ſhe anſwered, "I thank GOD, I have quitted this, and many more Things, for the Love of GOD, and yet find no Want at all."

27. GOD gave him Light to deſcern her proper Way, to teach her to renounce herſelf, and advance in the Paths of ſolid Virtue, and to ſupport her in great inward Afflictions; and ſhe, on her Part, reſigned up herſelf to his Guidance, and forced herſelf to put his Advice in Execution: A Thing very requiſite in thoſe who would make Uſe of the Conduct of others to good Purpoſe.

28. Though this happy Intercourſe, accompanied with ſuch ſignal Bleſſings, had contracted a ſtrict and perfect Friendſhip between them, yet he was very wary and reſerved in his Converſation with her; viſiting her only when the Work of God required it, and neither ſpeaking nor ſtaying with her any longer than was preciſely neceſſary. This ſhe thought a little harſh, and complained of it to a Friend, whom ſhe knew to have ſome Power with him, ſaying, "Mr. *de Renty* extreamly mortifies me with his Civilities and Reſervedneſs. I have great Need to ſee him often, and yet can't obtain it. Nay, when we are together, he will not ſit down, except when I am ſick, or not able to ſtand any longer; and always with his Hat in his Hand. I beg you to tell him, what out of Reſpect I dare not, what Inquietude I ſuffer, to ſee his Behaviour ſuch toward me, who ought to be continually under his Feet."

The Perſon acquainting him with this, he anſwer'd, "I proceed in this Manner, becauſe my Duty to God and to the Counteſs of *Châtres* require it. My Saviour obliges me to converſe with her; but I muſt do no more than what is neceſſary, and ſo retire, for which this Poſture is moſt convenient. If we ſat down, we ſhould forget ourſelves, and talk more than is neceſſary, and perhaps paſs on to Things unprofitable: Therefore we ought both to ſtand upon our Guard."

29. Thoſe who undertake the Conduct of Souls, ought ſeriouſly to conſider this Anſwer; and to be fully perſuaded, That the Buſineſs does not conſiſt in ſpeaking much to them, but in diſpoſing them to ſpeak to God, and in making them fit for God to ſpeak to them.

30. In the Year 1647, having viſited one afflicted with great Pains, he thus writ to his Director:

"I have been with the Perſon you know of, and have told her what I thought ſuitable to her Condition. I acquainted her, How we ought to lay this ſure Foundation, that we are nothing but Weakneſs and Miſery itſelf; and that God from this Inſufficiency of ourſelves to all Good, means to extract Humility

ty and Diffidence of ourſelves, obliging us thereby to fly to his Son, to find Strength in Him, and Remedy for all our Miſeries.

" As concerning myſelf, I have not much to ſay. Only I find within myſelf, by the Mercy of GOD, a great Tranquility in his Preſence, through the Spirit of JESUS CHRIST, and ſuch an inward Experience of eternal Life, as I am not able to expreſs. Yet I find myſelf ſo naked and barren, that I wonder at the Condition I am in, and by which I diſcourſe. In my Converſe with this Perſon, I begun my Speech, not knowing how to purſue it. After the ſecond Sentence I had not the leaſt Foreſight of what ſhould be the third; and ſo of the reſt. Not but that I ſeem to have a perfect Knowledge of the Things I ſpeak, in ſuch a Manner as I am capable of it. But I only utter what is given me, and in the ſame Way as it is communicated, I communicate it to others."

CHAP. IX.

His outward Behaviour, and Conduct of Buſineſs.

1. MR. *de Renty* being ſenſible, that even our outward Behaviour is of great Conſequence in the Service of our Neighbour, being that which makes the firſt Impreſſion upon them, did whatever he could for the well compoſing his Exterior, keeping his Geſtures, Motions, Looks, and all Parts of his Converſation in ſuch a Harmony, as he judged fitteſt to draw his Neighbour to GOD.

2. He was very modeſt, always calm and inviolably equal. "Among all the Things I obſerved in Mr. *de Renty*, (ſays one of his intimate Friends) what firſt affected me was, His rare Modeſty and great Evenneſs of Behaviour. There was ſomething in his Looks which carried ſo much Reverence in it, one might eaſily judge, he was always actually in the Preſence of GOD."

3. In every Condition and Employment whatſoever, he was the ſame in his Looks, Geſtures, Words, and Actions, whether alone or in Company, with Rich or Poor, Strangers or Friends, before his Children or Servants, yea even before his Footman, in the Country or Town, at the Table, and every where.

4. And ſuch a conſtant Equality was the more obſervable, becauſe of his natural Diſpoſition, which was not ſlow, heavy and phlegmatick, but cholerick, hot and active. But the exact and perpetual Care he had over himſelf, had wholly inverted his Nature, and brought him to a Behaviour, as well as Temper, directly oppoſite to thoſe he took from his Mother's Womb.

5. Another of his Friends writes of him thus: "That which pleaſed me moſt in him was, His great Recol-

Recollection and intimate Union with GOD: Attended with ſuch a wonderful Peace of Mind, as ſhone forth in his Countenance, and begot a Kind of Devotion in his Beholders. This Union, methought, was ever the ſame, without any Sign of Diſtraction or Levity, or any Word not neceſſary, no Complaiſance or human Regard ever forcing him to ſcatter his Spirit. Not but he was full of Civility; but ſtill ſo as to look more within himſelf than without."

6. And indeed this continual Preſence of GOD, ſo wholly took up his Spirit, that no unuſual Accident, or Object, or any Thing rare or extraordinary could divert him. I never ſaw him admire any Thing in the World, nor fix his Eyes upon any Curioſity whatever. And his Gait in the Streets was ſo recollected, modeſt and equal, without gazing on any Thing, that a Man might ſee JESUS CHRIST was his Way, his Employment, and his All.

7. In his Speech he was very reſerved, by Choice as well as by Nature. In whatever Company it concerned him to ſpeak, he did ſo in his Courſe, with a compoſed Demeanour, and Words few, but material. He was never known forward or eager to ſpeak, or in ſpeaking, to do it with a higher Tone than ordinary. If he gave an Account of any Buſineſs, he did it ſo briefly, and in Words ſo pertinent, that it was a very hard Matter to find one that ſpoke better, and yet leſs than he.

8. Things that were unprofitable, or the News of the Times, were never the Subject of his Diſcourſe: But always ſomething pertaining to the Kingdom of GOD. And when the Converſation was diverted to worldly Things, he either took Leave of the Company, or ſtole away without.

9. And when he talked even of good Things, it was with Care and Moderation; ſaying, "There was much Need of Sparingneſs and Sobriety, when we ſpeak even of the Things of GOD, leſt it turn to no good Account: And that it was a great Trouble to him, when among ſerious Perſons, to hear them often ſpend precious Time in talking of Virtue at large, and

to

to find them departing from ſuch Conferences, with dry, empty, and diſſipated Spirits."

10. As to Conduct of Buſineſs, his Method was, ſeriouſly to conſider Things, before any Reſolution; and if after his own Senſe given, he found another's to be better, he readily quitted his own. After he had reſolved, he was prompt, firm and conſtant in the Execution of it. But ſometimes, when he had gone through the Difficulties of a Deſign, he left it to a Friend to finiſh; not out of Inconſtancy, but to gain Time for undertaking more, as well as to avoid the Honour of it.

11. In all Affairs that concerned the Service of God, he had an immoveable Conſtancy. And beſide the Force of his Words, there appeared in his Face an extraordinary Aſſurance, (tho' his ordinary Deportment was always ſweet and quiet) which particularly appeared in all Meetings, where he manifeſted ſuch a Spirit, that thoſe who beheld him, felt themſelves ſtruck with an awful Regard. His Propoſals generally carried ſo much Light and Force in them, that all were conſtrained to acquieſce in his Determination. But if any diſputed his Reaſons, he knew how to enforce them; and if they chanced to make another Reply, (which was a Thing that exceeding rarely happened) he ſaid not one Word more, but his very Silence, and the Steadineſs of his Countenance, reſtrained any further Diſpute. The Meeting ended, he would go to that Perſon and aſk his Pardon; informing him, "That what he aimed at, was, not to make good his own Opinion, but to advance the Cauſe of God; in all other Things he was ready to yield to every one."

12. But of all Things he took Care, not to overcharge himſelf with Buſineſs, to the Prejudice of his Piety. He knew that outward Employments, even the moſt holy, may be Hindrances to inward Holineſs. Wherefore he was careful not to over-burden himſelf with them, and very vigilant, that they ſhould not diſtract and diſſipate him, nor ſecularize his Soul, but ſerve only as Means to elevate and unite him more to God.

13. And

13. And GOD ſo bleſſed him herein, that in the Multitude of Buſineſs, he was ſtill in a continual Recollection. A familiar Friend aſking him, Whether in that Throng of Employments, he obſerved his uſual two Hours of Prayer; he anſwered, "When I can, I keep three Hours, ſometimes four or five; but when Occaſion offers to ſerve my Neighbour, I eaſily quit them, for GOD of his Mercy hath given me the Grace, to be inſeparably with Him, even in the Croud of Buſineſs." To the ſame Purpoſe he writ to his Director; "I continue my Devotion out of the Time and Place of Prayer, even in the Midſt of Converſe and Buſineſs: And I tell you ſincerely, though I perform every Thing ſo ill, yet I find little Difference of Times for Prayer, being recollected continually." And the ſame might be gathered (as was obſerved before) from his Modeſty and compoſed Countenance, clearly evidencing, that his Soul was wholly and conſtantly in Application to GOD, from whom he drew Light and Strength, for the Conduct of all his Buſineſs. Of which he thus wrote to his Director; "My Recollection hinders no Buſineſs at all, but furthers it. Without it I ſhould have a ſollicitous Deſire of doing all myſelf: Whereas I act now in a moſt calm Way, in which I have no Share; for it is our LORD that doth all." In another Letter thus; "Finding myſelf one Day much burthened with Variety of Buſineſſes, I had a Deſire to draw off my Mind wholly; and at the ſame Inſtant it was done. Since that Time they create me no Trouble, and I diſpatch them more readily without thinking of them. This Grace hath been often renewed in me, (although in ſeveral Manners) which I acknowledge to be very great, becauſe it preſerves me diſingaged, even in the Multiplicity of Buſineſs."

14. If after he had done his Part, any Deſign miſcarried, he reſted well ſatisfied. On ſuch an Occaſion he thus writ to a Friend; "We may take up good Deſigns, and GOD often inſpires them; yet when he is pleaſed to permit a contrary Event, we muſt adore his ſecret Will, which brings more of Mercy in the croſſing of them, than if they had ſucceeded. We ſhould

ſhould always be jealous over our Spirit, that it fix not upon any Thing." And again, "Our LORD has his Deſigns, which he effects by ſuch Means as we would not at all make Choice of: The Reaſon is, becauſe He would break our Wills, and abate our Dependencies upon Earth. Therefore He often croſſes our beſt Undertakings, being more jealous of the Sacrifice of our Hearts, than any Thing elſe, how ſpecious ſoever."

15. I cannot better conclude this Chapter, than with a Letter writ to his Director on this Subject:

"For theſe three or four Months I have been, as it were, continually employed in outward Works; as removing from Place to Place, new building a Church, taking Care of the Sick, reconciling Differences, conferring with all Sorts of People. Yeſterday hearing thoſe Words of the Goſpel read, "Thou art troubled about many Things," it was ſaid to my Heart, "Thou art not troubled about many Things," giving me to underſtand, that the Things we are employed upon, according to the Will of GOD, do not create us that Trouble; and that *Martha* was not reproved for doing the Work, but for doing it too ſollicitouſly. Our Saviour intimating to her, that no Buſineſs ſhould be done with inordinate Agitation of Spirit. Since our great Buſineſs is, to hear the eternal Word, and act nothing with Diſturbance, but all in Peace by his Spirit."

"I received hereby a great Support in the Performance of theſe petty exterior Offices, and made no Difficulty at all to yield myſelf up to this holily-diſordered divine Order. At the ſame Time I enjoyed ſuch a ſenſible Impreſſion of GOD, yet excelling all Senſe, that if I had been thrown like a Bowl, I could never have loſt the Sight of my GOD. Our LORD turns this Bowl in a ſtrange Manner, even as it pleaſeth Him. And theſe ſeveral Turnings are all for the Soul's Advantage, whereby ſhe is faſhioned for every Occaſion, that ſhe may do nothing for or by herſelf, but all for GOD, and according to Him.

"I

" I ſee likewiſe that one whom GOD employs in theſe low Affairs, if he follow them with the ſame Fidelity, is as acceptable to GOD, as one that is employed in the moſt noble Functions. Will nothing pleaſe you but to convert Worlds? You ſhall be content to carry Stones: And ſometimes to ſit ſtill and do nothing. You are then to offer the Sacrifice of Patience. And I believe it is a thouſand Times more rare, to find a Soul thus faithful in Patience, and content to do no more than GOD would have him, than faithful in Actions that appear abroad.

" I have one Word more to tell you; which is, that I am really aſhamed and confounded, that I do no more for GOD; which indeed, with the Senſe of my Unfitneſs for any Thing that is Good, would work me much Torment, did I not conſider, He is All-ſufficient, and doth with us as He pleaſeth."

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

Of his Death.

1. ON the 11th of *April*, 1649, he found himſelf very ill, and having concealed his Sickneſs five Days, was then conſtrained to take his Bed. He endured great Pains all over his Body, with which his Mind too was ſo much affected, that he profeſt, if GOD had not aſſiſted him againſt the Ravings of his Imagination, he ſhould have ſpoken more Extravagancies than any Madman. "There was much, he ſaid, in ſuch a Condition to humble him. But it was the Duty of a Sinner to honour GOD, in all Conditions wherein he ſhould place him."

2. During theſe great Pains and Torments, and during the whole Courſe of his Sickneſs, his ordinary Employment conſiſted in affectionate Elevations of his Soul to GOD, in Thoughts and Words of Bleſſing, Praiſe, and Submiſſion to whatſoever was laid upon him, and of Meekneſs and perfect Obedience to all that attended and had the Care of him, with ſuch a humble and contented Spirit, that he thought all well done, though ſometimes it was otherwiſe.

3. His Patience never gave Way to any Complaint. And when his Keeper, who was of the Hoſpital of Charity, with whom he had viſited ſo many Poor and Sick, importuned him to declare his Pain, "O Siſter, ſaid he, How does the Love of GOD wipe away all Pain? The Servants of GOD ſuffer nothing." Another Friend aſking, If his Pain was not great? He anſwered, No. The other replied, "He thought it was." "It is true, ſaith he, that I am much clogged with my Diſeaſe; but I feel it not, becauſe I do not think of it."

4. Be-

4. Being urged to take ſome ſweet Things, he refuſed, ſaying, "Theſe make little for Life or for Death. Yet he refuſed not Phyſick, but took it with a chearful Countenance, though it was very bitter, and he had a great Difficulty in ſwallowing. Indeed when one told him of another Medicine which had done great Cures, he anſwered, "Patience is a ſovereign Remedy," intimating his Unwillingneſs to try it. Yet when it was brought, he took it without any Reluctance.

5. His Sickneſs increaſing more and more, yet he never called for any thing to refreſh him: And when they had forced clean Sheets upon his Bed, and a Pillow, which he had before refuſed, he ſaid, "Lo! here lies a Gentleman at his Eaſe."

6. Feeling ſome Joy ariſe in him, upon the Sight of a Perſon of his Acquaintance, with whom he had held a ſtrict Correſpondence in Spiritual Things, who came out of the Country on purpoſe to viſit him: He immediately repeated thrice over, with great Fervour, "I deſire nothing more but GOD."

7. Reflecting on the Poor, the conſtant Objects of his tendereſt Care, he ſaid to his Lady, "I recommend the Poor to you. Will not you have a great Care of them? You will perform it better than I. Fear nothing; what you give to them, will not leſſen the reſt."

8. The greateſt Part of the firſt Week of his Illneſs, and ſome Part of the ſecond likewiſe, was ſpent by him in Works of Mercy, appointing of Alms, and giving Orders for Letters to be writ into ſeveral Provinces, about Buſineſs of Charity wherewith he ſtood charged, and whereof he gave an exact Account.

9. Many Perſons of Quality coming to viſit him, he receiv'd them with much Civility, but not without ſome Concern, becauſe moſt of thoſe Viſits drew on Diſcourſe of worldly Things. "They come hither, ſaid he, to talk Philoſophy; of which I have no need." And another Time his Expreſſion was,

"A Chriſtian ſhould talk little."

10. A Lady of great Piety coming to viſit him, ſaid! "Sir, I would with all my Heart lay down my Life to ſave yours." He replied with a chearful Look, and Eyes lifted up to Heaven, "To die is not to be loſt. Our Converſation and Union will hereafter be more near and intimate." She ſaid, "But, Sir, if it pleaſed GOD to reſtore your Health, and continue you longer with us; Do not you deſire it? St. *Martin* deſired to live upon theſe Terms." He anſwer'd, O Madam, there is no Compariſon between a Saint and a Sinner! The Will of GOD be done."

11. The third Day of his Sickneſs he deſired his Director might be ſent for. And being aſk'd, If he found himſelf worſe? he anſwer'd, "No; but in a Buſineſs of this Conſequence, it is not ſafe to delay, for fear of a Surprizal, the Judgment and Memory being both ſo ſubject to decay." The next Day he made his Confeſſion, the Day after he confeſs'd again, and almoſt every Day till his Death.

12. The Paſtor of his Pariſh having adminiſtered to him the Holy Communion, and obſerving his deep Silence, not ſpeaking one Word, but only with profound Humility, "My GOD, my GOD, pardon me; I am a great Sinner!" He aſked him the Reaſon, why he ſpake ſo little, and did not apply himſelf to thoſe who were well-pleaſed to hear him? "It is not fitting, ſaid he, to ſpeak in the Preſence of him whom I have received, nor take up any Room in thoſe Hearts, which ought to be filled only with GOD." He added, "My Spirit is now applied to that Joy, which a Creature ought to have, to ſee himſelf upon the Point of being re-united to his firſt Principle, and his laſt End."

13. The ſame Day after Dinner, one told him, "It was fit to uſe ſome Diverſion from his ſerious Thoughts; the Phyſicians judging his Diſeaſe to have much of Melancholy in it." To whom he replied, "I never had any Joy comparable to that I have felt this Day." He aſked him, For what Cauſe? "To think, ſaid he, that I am going to be united with my GOD." He added earneſtly, "I deſire to be diſſolved, and to be with CHRIST. The Spirit and the Bride ſay, Come;

Come; and let him that heareth ſay, Come. And he that thirſteth, Let him come. Behold I come quickly. Amen; Come LORD JESUS!"

14. About Noon, he deſired his Window might be ſet open, that he might behold the Brightneſs of the Day: Which being done, he cried out, "O bright Day of Eternity! How this Sun-ſhine chears me! helping me to meditate on that Day, which ſhall never have Night!"

15. The more his Sickneſs increaſed, the more he ſtrove to unite himſelf to GOD by Prayer, imitating his Maſter, who in the Strength of his Agony, prayed the more earneſtly. And when the Violence of his Diſeaſe ſo oppreſt him, that he had need of greater ſtraining, to keep his Mind fixed upon GOD, he cried out,

"Courage, Courage! Eternity is at Hand!"

16. Many ſuch Speeches he uttered with incredible Fervor, tho' he could not pronounce them diſtinctly, by reaſon of the extreme Dryneſs of his Throat, occaſioned by the Fever. Till at laſt, ſtopping his Speech, he fixed his Eyes ſtedfaſtly on Heaven, for a Quarter of an Hour together, with a ſmiling Look, and full of Reverence, as if he ſaw ſome extraordinary Sight. After which, gathering all his Strength, he ſat up in his Bed, took off his Cap, and holding it in his Hand, ſaid, (with Words half ſtifled in his Throat, as well by the Ardor of his Spirit, as the Weakneſs of his Body)

"I adore you, I adore you."

17. The Curate having uſed the Service of the Church, to which he attended with great Devotion, anſwering to every Prayer, aſked him, If he would not give a Bleſſing to his Children? he anſwered, "How ſo, good Sir, ſhall I preſume to give a Bleſſing in your Preſence? I ſhould be happy to receive one from you." But being urged thereto, and told

the Church allowed it, he lifted up his Hands and Eyes to Heaven, ſaying,

" May it pleaſe GOD to bleſs you, and to preſerve you by his Grace from the Malignity of the World, that you may have no Part therein! And above all, my Children, may you live in the Fear and Love of GOD, and yield due Obedience to your Mother!"

18. On *Saturday*, about half an Hour paſt Ten in the Forenoon, being juſt recover'd out of a violent Convulſion, looking attentively on thoſe that were preſent, he made Signs with his Hands, Head and Eyes, with a pleaſant Countenance, for an intimate Friend to come near him. Which being done, he ſaid,

" Sir, I have one Word to ſay to you before I die:" (then pauſing a little to recover his Strength, he teſtified his Affection to him, but in Words that could not diſtinctly be underſtood. At length raiſing his Voice, and ſpeaking more articulately, he went on) " The Perfection of a Chriſtian Life, is to be united to GOD by Faith. Let us not entangle ourſelves in Novelties. Let us adore his Conduct over us, and continue faithful to him unto the End. Let us adhere to that one GOD, crucified for our Salvation. Let us unite all our Actions, and all that is in us to his Merits; hoping that if we continue faithful to him, by his Grace we ſhall be Partakers of the Glory of his Father. I hope we ſhall there ſee one another one Day, which ſhall never have an End."

19. Some time after, fixing his Eyes upon Heaven, he ſaid, " The Holy JESUS, where is He?" They brought him his Picture, which he affectionately kiſſed. Then turning himſelf, he preſently enter'd into his laſt Agony; which held about a Quarter of an Hour, the greateſt Part of which he ſpent in pronouncing the Name of JESUS; making as well as he could, Acts of Reſignation, and commending his Spirit to GOD. After which he expired ſweetly, and his holy Soul departed to its Place of Reſt.

20. Thus lived and died Mr. *de Renty*, one of the moſt glorious Lights GOD hath beſtowed upon his Church in our Age. He died at *Paris*, in the 37th Year

Year of his Age, the 24th of *April* 1649, about Noon. We have great Reaſon to admire the ſecret Councils of GOD, in taking out of the World, in the Flower of his Age, a Man ſo qualified to advance the Honour of GOD, and the Good of his Neighbour. But when we ſay, it was the Hand of GOD, all Things are therein concluded. Hereby he is pleaſed to let us know, that he hath no need of us for the advancing his Glory; and that when he does uſe us as Inſtruments therein, we ought to behave with all Humility in his Preſence. He hath tranſlated him to another Place, where he glorifies his Majeſty with greater Perfection; and where he waits for us to glorify and love, together with him, GOD the Father, the SON, and the HOLY GHOST, to all Eternity! *Amen!*

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